

Revolution and Crisis: 1383-85 in the Portuguese Historiography During the Fascist Dictatorship (1926-1974)*

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Abstract: Contrary to the false idea that History is an exercise free from any ideological questions of those who write it, this study aims to demonstrate how Portuguese historiography dealt with a specific theme of Portugal's medieval past throughout the twentieth century. Picking a key-social group and its role in 1383-85 - the artisans - I seek to understand how the Portuguese historians used these agents throughout the fascist dictatorship (1926-1974) to portray this historical moment. This period is an important milestone at the end of the Middle Ages in Portugal, and the historiographical discussions around it have been a constant battle between the use of concepts such as *Revolution* and *Crisis*. Using the works of six relevant authors - António Sérgio, António Borges Coelho, Joel Serrão, Jaime Cortesão, Marcello Caetano, and Franz-Paul Almeida Langhans - I seek to understand the evolution of the historical-philosophical thought of Portuguese intellectual elites, how the social and political environment influenced their study of the past, and how the historical knowledge answered to the material needs of its authors' present and helped to shape our image of that same past, regarding specifically the medieval artisans.

Keywords: Historiography; Gnoseology; Fascism; Antifascism; Medievalism.

Rezumat: Contrar ideii false că istoria este un exercițiu lipsit de orice interferențe ideologice ale celor care o scriu, acest studiu își propune să demonstreze modul în care istoriografia portugheză a abordat o temă specifică a trecutului medieval al Portugaliei de-a lungul secolului al XX-lea. Alegând un grup social cheie și rolul său în perioada 1383-1385 – meșteșugarii –, încerc să înțeleg modul în care istoricii portughezi au folosit acești agenți pe parcursul dictaturii fasciste (1926-1974) pentru

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a descrie acest moment istoric. Această perioadă reprezintă o etapă importantă la sfârșitul Evului Mediu în Portugalia, iar discuțiile istoriografice din jurul ei au fost o luptă constantă între utilizarea conceptelor precum Revoluție și Criză. Folosind lucrările a șase autori relevanți – António Sérgio, António Borges Coelho, Joel Serrão, Jaime Cortesão, Marcello Caetano și Franz-Paul Almeida Langhans - încerc să înțeleg evoluția gândirii istorico-filozofice a elitelor intelectuale portugheze, modul în care mediul social și politic a influențat studiul lor asupra trecutului și modul în care cunoștințele istorice au răspuns nevoilor materiale ale prezentului autorilor și au contribuit la formarea imaginii noastre asupra aceluiași trecut, în special în ceea ce privește meșteșugarii medievali.

Cuvinte-cheie: Istoriografie; Gnoseologie; Fascism; Antifascism; Medievalism.

History is ideological

How the past, and more particularly the Middle Ages, was used by European intellectual elites throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been the subject of several studies, which have been concerned with reading the contributions of this elite and, more specifically, of historians, as what they are: a portrait of the times and ideological systems of their authors. All History is ideological because every historian is an ideological being, no matter how invested they might be in appearing “impartial”. In this context, the historiography of the nineteenth century has been the most deeply studied, evaluating the role of its most varied ideological currents in the study of the past. For the medieval period, more specifically, it will not surprise anyone, the relevance of *Romanticism* and its attempts to recover from the past (artificially, of course) an idea of *Nation* (or its historical roots), which intended to, more than evaluating this past, answer emerging needs. The processes of affirmation of *Nation-States* throughout the nineteenth century created a historical-philosophical need to support these material projects, with the study of the medieval past playing a central role here.¹

¹ On this topic, we should refer to some works by Stefan Berger: Stefan Berger, ‘The Invention of European National Traditions in European Romanticism,’ in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing: Volume 4: 1800-1945*, ed. Stuart Macintyre, Juan Maiguashca, and Attila Pók (Oxford University Press, 2011), 0, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:osobl/9780199533091.003.0002>; Stefan Berger, *History and Identity*, 1st ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9780511984525>.

On other occasions, I have focused on how Portuguese historiography, particularly at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, dealt with the study of its past, with a particular focus on the medieval period, in general terms.² More recently, I have considered relevant to add to these approaches other analyses that could understand how the Portuguese historiography observed the artisans from the late Middle Ages. This interest, deeply rooted in the particular interests that arose from my ongoing doctoral research project,³ is due to the realization of the centrality of these historical agents in the development of the historical past, but mostly because it became more and more evident that the image we have of these agents has been shaped in the last two centuries according to different ideological contexts, which influences the way we perceive them nowadays. In the Portuguese context, this centrality materialized in historiographical discourse to a greater extent throughout the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, as well as throughout the Portuguese fascist dictatorial period (between 1926 and 1974), due to their instrumentalization by the different ideological currents and, in the case of the *Estado Novo*, by the regime itself. The Portuguese medieval artisans emerge here as excellent historical agents for understanding contemporary ethical-philosophical thought and the dynamics of instrumentalization of the past verifiable throughout the twentieth century, seeking to answer contemporary needs and questions.

The use of the past is a recurring theme in Portuguese historiography, which has been presenting various approaches to the way, above all, that the *Estado Novo* promoted new readings of the past to build and strengthen the regime. The Middle Ages were not the exclusive time used to promote these

² One study concerning the image of the Portuguese medieval king João II (1455-1495), as the *perfect prince*, with a dialogue with the work of Niccolò Machiavelli - Marco Alexandre Ribeiro, 'O Príncipe Perfeito: a figura de D. João II à luz da historiografia liberal portuguesa,' *História: revista da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto* 10, no. 1 (7 July 2020), <https://ojs.letras.up.pt/index.php/historia/article/view/8278>. - And another study focused of the impact of Liberalism and Socialism in the Portuguese historiography throughout the nineteenth-century, with special emphasis on the Middle Ages - Marco Alexandre Ribeiro, 'O projeto liberal na historiografia portuguesa,' in *A Revolução Liberal, 200 anos depois* (Porto: Zéfiro, 2021), 64-78, <https://ler.letras.up.pt/uploads/ficheiros/18848.pdf>.

³ About the processes of building a political consciousness among Portuguese artisans in the late Middle Ages (from the second half of the fourteenth century until the first decades of the sixteenth) - DOI: <<https://doi.org/10.54499/UI/BD/152205/2021>>.

objectives, but they were probably one of the most striking, along with the history of Portuguese colonial expansion.⁴ Several authors in Portugal have worked on these themes, such as Alicia Miguélez and Pedro Martins,⁵ which align with what has also been developing in the historiographic contexts of other regions.⁶ In any case, the practice of writing history in Portugal still

⁴ The myths surrounding Portuguese colonial history have also been a frequent topic of debate in Portuguese historiography, especially from the perspective of the cultural heritage left by the Estado Novo and how that regime dealt with this topic through historiography and the use of public space. Two exhibitions stand out in this context: the *First Portuguese Colonial Exhibition* (in Portuguese, *I Exposição Colonial Portuguesa*), held in 1936, in Porto, where the aim was to make known the cultures of the Portuguese Empire and, to this end, “human zoos” were organized, inserted in staged contexts that sought to portray the lives of the most varied Indigenous people; and the *Portuguese World Exhibition* (in Portuguese, *Exposição do Mundo Português*) of 1940 (double centenary of the “foundation” of Portugal - 1140 - and the Restoration of independence - 1640), which promoted the reconstruction of the entire neighbourhood in which it was hosted (Belém) and the construction of some public spaces and monuments (namely *Praça do Império* and *Padrão dos Descobrimentos*). This international exhibition sought to make the so-called “Portuguese world” known to the world and aimed to legitimize the regime in a context disturbed by the course of the Second World War.

⁵ Alicia Miguélez, ‘Riding Across Time and Space: A Case Study of the Political Uses of Medieval Images in Portugal during the Estado Novo,’ *Visual Resources* 32, no. 1–2 (2016): 124–44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01973762.2015.1130934>; Pedro Alexandre Guerreiro Martins, ‘History, Nation and Politics: The Middle Ages in Modern Portugal (1890–1947)’ (doctoralThesis, 2016), <https://run.unl.pt/handle/10362/19092>; Pedro Alexandre Guerreiro Martins, ‘Uma época de grandeza: Idade Média, decadência e regeneração na historiografia portuguesa (1842–1942),’ *Revista de Teoria da História* 17, no. 1 (27 July 2017): 30–69; Pedro Martins, ‘De Afonso Henriques a Vasco Da Gama: Representações Da História de Portugal Na Exposição Do Mundo Português (1940) e Na Expo’98,’ *Língua-Lugar : Literatura, História, Estudos Culturais*, no. 1 (29 June 2020): 44–65, <https://doi.org/10.34913/journals/lingua-lugar.2020.e205>; Alicia Miguélez and Pedro Martins, ‘The Uses of the Medieval Past in Contemporary European Political Discourse: Some Reflections Arising from the Portuguese Case,’ *E-Journal of Portuguese History* 21 (2023): 73–102, <https://doi.org/10.26300/0S30-CD74>.

⁶ Andrew B. R. Elliott, *Medievalism, Politics and Mass Media: Appropriating the Middle Ages in the Twenty-First Century* (Martlesham: Boydell & Brewer, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvc16jn7>; Alejandro García-Sanjuán, ‘Rejecting Al-Andalus, Exalting the Reconquista: Historical Memory in Contemporary Spain,’ *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 10, no. 1 (2 January 2018): 127–45, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17546559.2016.1268263>; Andrew Albin et al., eds., *Whose Middle Ages? Teachable Moments for an Ill-Used Past*, First Edition, Fordham Series in Medieval Studies (New York: Fordham University Press, 2019); Christian Amalvi, ‘Chapter 19. The Middle Ages: Support for a Counter-Revolutionary and Reactionary Ideology, 1830–1944,’ in *Ideology in the Middle Ages*, ed. Flocel Sabaté (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 413–22, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781641892612-022>; Antonio de Murcia Conesa, ‘Chapter 20. The Middle

seems to be deeply marked by some cultural inheritances from the historiography of fascist Portugal, particularly about the use of some concepts and even analytical perspectives on the Middle Ages, and more specifically, about the history of artisans in the Portuguese urban contexts of this specific period. It is precisely about these analyses that we intend to talk about!

However, given the impossibility of analyzing all the historiographical productions in the selected period, we have chosen a group of historians who seemed significant in this context: António Sérgio (1883-1969), Jaime Cortesão (1884-1960), Joel Serrão (1919-2008), António Borges Coelho (1928-), Marcello Caetano (1906-1980) and Franz-Paul de Almeida Langhans (1908-1986). The first four are prominent figures in the anti-fascist resistance among the Portuguese intellectual elite.⁷ The last two represent the historiographical discourse of the fascist regime.⁸ Many others could undoubtedly be added to these names,⁹ however, to save time and space, but above all for the sake

Ages among Spanish Intellectuals of the First Half of the Twentieth Century,' in *Ideology in the Middle Ages. Approaches from the Southwestern Europe*, ed. Flocel Sabaté (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019), 20, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781641892612-023>; Karl Fugelso, ed., *Studies in Medievalism XXIX: Politics and Medievalism (Studies)* (Martlesham: Boydell & Brewer, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvxhrjqn>; Andrew B. R. Elliott, 'Medievalism, Brexit, and the Myth of Nations,' in *Studies in Medievalism XXIX*, ed. Karl Fugelso, 1st ed. (Boydell and Brewer Limited, 2020), 31–38, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781787448957.005>.

⁷ Three of them were arrested and/or lived in exile during some period of the fascist dictatorship (António Sérgio, Jaime Cortesão and António Borges Coelho). Joel Serrão lived under constant surveillance by the political police of the fascist regime (PIDE – Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado, in English: International and State Defense Police).

⁸ The first was a professor at the Faculty of Law of the University of Lisbon, later Rector of this public education institution, notable for his works on the history of Portuguese law since the Middle Ages, and some works focused on the organization of late medieval labor in Portugal. Shortly before the death of the dictator Oliveira Salazar (in 1970), he was appointed by the then President of the Portuguese Republic, Américo Tomás, President of the Council of Ministers of the fascist regime, remaining in office between 1968 and 1974. The second, private secretary of Oliveira Salazar, was a renowned Portuguese historian during the fascist regime, also developing several works on the history of Portuguese law and several studies on the Portuguese urban labor world of the late Middle Ages, highlighting his corporatist perspective (in line with the ideological project of the Estado Novo, fascist and corporatist).

⁹ Such is the case of authors like: Salvador Dias Arnaut (1913-1995), with a PhD thesis on the "national crisis" of 1383-85, and Professor at the School of Arts and Humanities of the University of Lisbon until 1974, when he was removed for affiliations with the fascist regime (he would return to this faculty in 1978) - Salvador Manuel Dias dos Santos Arnaut, 'A crise nacional dos fins do século XIV : I - a sucessão de D. Fernando' (doctoral Thesis, Coimbra, Faculdade

of focus, I decided to choose names capable of successfully illustrating the representation I am trying to elaborate here. This does not mean that, in case of need or relevance, other names cannot be mentioned at an opportune moment, as we shall see.

The historical time on which our analysis will focus falls precisely on the military dictatorship (1926-1933) and the fascist *Estado Novo* (1933-1974). The analysis of a previous time would, perhaps, be of great interest and usefulness but would lose the focus of this analytical exercise: the fascist and opposition historiographical discourses. For this reason, and to better frame the work of some of the selected authors, I chose a chronological frame that could include the military dictatorship initiated by the military coup of May 28, 1926, which established in Portugal a conservative dictatorship inspired by Italian fascism (although with its specific characteristics), and which would give place, in 1933, with the approval of a new Constitution, to *Estado Novo*, one of the longest fascist dictatorships in all of European contemporary history, which would be overthrown in 1974 by a military coup, transformed by the Portuguese people in a Revolution.

de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra, 1960), <https://estudogeral.uc.pt/handle/10316/12536>; Álvaro Cunhal (1913-2005), leader of the Portuguese Communist Party between 1961 (when the party was still illegal) and 1992. Was a prominent antifascist throughout the entirety of the fascist regime in Portugal and published some historical analysis on Portuguese history, namely one concerning the 1383-85 revolution, an expression of the *class struggle* in the late Middle Ages, according to him (first written in 1950, but only published in 1975, after the Carnation Revolution, for obvious reasons) - Álvaro Cunhal, *As Lutas de Classes Em Portugal Nos Fins Da Idade Média* (Lisboa: Caminho, 1997); Damião Peres (1889-1976), a renowned Portuguese historian with a vast list of published works on distinct topics, with a clear emphasis on the colonial history - Damião Peres, 'A Crise Política de 1383,' in *História Da Expansão Portuguesa No Mundo*, ed. António Baião, Hernani Cidade, and Manuel Múrias, vol. I (Lisboa: Ática, 1937), 113-20; and Alfredo Pimenta (1882-1950), assumed fascist, supporter of Salazar (the Portuguese dictator) and with declared sympathies for the international fascist and nazi movements. He was the director of the Portuguese national archive between 1949 and 1951, and published many works on Portuguese medieval history, some of them regarding the revolution of 1383-85 (which he portrays as a crisis) - Alfredo Pimenta, 'A Crise de 1383-85. Robustecimento Do Espírito Nacional, Consolidação Da Independência,' in *Congresso Do Mundo Português (Publicações)*, vol. II (Memórias e Comunicações apresentadas ao Congresso de História Medieval-II Congresso) (Lisboa: Bertrand, 1940), 221-46. On this last author's considerations on the alleged *crisis* of 1383-85 see also the work published in 1987 by Paulo Drumond Braga: Paulo César Drumond Braga, 'Alfredo Pimenta e 1383-1385,' *Boletim de Trabalhos Históricos XXXVIII* (1987): 48-60.

This work departs precisely from the premise of this introduction: *History is ideological*. As mentioned above, historians have recurrently looked at the past through the most varied lenses, each and every one of them *ideological* (consciously or not). In the following point of discussion, we analyze the specific case of the study of the medieval period, generally speaking, but first it seems relevant to reflect a bit more on the role played by *ideology* when writing history. And that seems important, first of all, precisely because *history* is not the same as the *past*. It might be, at best, an interpretation of that past, but never (because it cannot be) an exact description of what might have happened. *History* is, therefore, an *image* of the past. Most of the times the possible image.

This introduces a dual direction within the same discussion (that of history as ideological). The first one relates directly to the authors of history: the historians, those who interpret the past, who are influenced and limited by their contemporary contradictions and worldviews. To not consider this fact, is to believe that historians could, in a way, become ahistoric and erase themselves from their life experiences and from the society that surrounds them. Secondly, one has also to consider the tools available to write history: the sources. It seems equally complicated to believe that any document we, as historians, use to interpret the past is not itself a product of the *ideology* of that same past.

The significance of *ideology* used throughout this text is linked to its reliance on Marxist approaches, based on works by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, namely *The German Ideology*.¹⁰ This is to say, then, that the concept used in our work is the notion that *ideology* is a false perception of reality, profoundly influenced by the most varied material conditions and contradictions, to which all members of human societies are subjected.¹¹ This false idea of reality has, in a Marxist approach, a political purpose for those who hold the power (the *bourgeoisie*), precisely to affirm and perpetuate it, through the dominance of those excluded from power (the *working class*, generally speaking). For that reason, the ideology of an epoch is frequently presented

¹⁰ Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology. Students Edition* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1974).

¹¹ And this does not exclude in any way the possibility of the appearance of different notions of reality, as Gramsci so well presented in his works on *counter-hegemony* - Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks, European Perspectives* (New York, NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 1992).

as *common sense*, not because it is “naturally” common, but because it is made, through social relations, common.¹²

This is an important notion to keep in mind when considering the second fact of the discussion presented above, related to the production of the historical sources. It is impossible, based on this notion of *ideology*, to understand these materials as something other than a product of the ideology of an epoch. In this sense, history is ideological “by nature” almost, since it cannot deal with facts, but it is, in reality, an interpretation - by the historians - of an interpretation of reality - by those who produced the sources, who cannot also universally comprehend the facts of their time; what they can offer us is a snapshot of their reality, influenced by the ideology of the time. It is precisely in this sense that we affirm that *History is ideological*, and that is the motto that guides the following analysis, where we try to move through the historians’ interpretations of a specific past and theme in dialogue with their present.

¹² “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. The individuals composing the ruling class possess among other things consciousness and therefore think. Insofar, therefore, as they rule as a class and determine the extent and compass of an epoch, it is self-evident that they do this in its whole range, hence among other things rule also as thinkers, as producers of ideas, and regulate the production and distribution of the ideas of their age: thus their ideas are the ruling ideas of the epoch. For instance, in an age and in a country where royal power, aristocracy, and bourgeoisie are contending for mastery and where, therefore, mastery is shared, the doctrine of this separation of powers proves to be the dominant idea and is expressed as an “eternal law.” Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology. Students Edition*, 64–65. The following pages of this chapter (until page 68) deal precisely with the concept of ideology and the social relations of production (the relationship between the *bourgeoisie* or the *ruling class* and *working class*). This is to say that we accept, in our work, a structuralist approach to *ideology*, which is not the only existent. About the understanding of this concept in Marxist tradition see the work by Mary E. Triece, published in 2018 - Mary E. Triece, ‘Ideology in Marxist Traditions,’ in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.557>.

The Middle Ages: a reactionary epoch?

Diverse historiographical currents have studied the medieval past in profoundly different ways. This historical period served different ideological projects in various temporal realities from the nineteenth century to the present day, as it continues to mark its presence in current political discourse, as several of the studies previously presented show. However, an image seems to remain in the collective consciousness of our contemporary societies: that of the Middle Ages as a dark historical period (the so-called *Dark Ages*).¹³ This image still seems to associate the Middle Ages with a time of famines, plagues, and wars (the Holy Trinity of medieval misfortune and three of the four horsemen of the Apocalypse), despite several attempts by historians dedicated to the study of this period in deconstructing such images.¹⁴ This idea, notoriously mistaken, seems to persist in the collective mentality of our current societies, which generally assumes this long period as a civilizational setback in contrast with Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire. This image, which also influenced the academic community, persists in current discourse, specifically through using the medieval times in political discourse.

This persistent misconception seems to continue over time. Such an apparent reality leads one to wonder about possible justifications. Our approaches to contemporary medievalism in this and previous occasions, suggests two distinct reasons, perfectly debatable: the first concerns a relative

¹³ On this subject, we refer to a recent study by Andrew Elliott; an analysis on medievalism through the social media: Andrew B.R. Elliott, ‘#Medieval: “First World” Medievalism and Participatory Culture,’ in *Middle Ages without Borders: A Conversation on Medievalism : Medioevo Senza Frontiere : Una Conversazione Sul Medievalismo / Moyen Âge sans Frontières : Conversation Sur Le Médiévalisme*, ed. Pierre Savy, Lila Yawn, and Tommaso di Carpegna Falconieri, Collection de l’École Française de Rome (Rome: Publications de l’École française de Rome, 2021), 87–106, <https://doi.org/10.4000/books.efr.18532>.

¹⁴ On this note, many works could be mentioned, as it is indeed an interest on the part of many medievalists (or at least should be). We would highlight a recent work with the provocative title *The Bright Ages*, by Matthew Gabriele and David M. Perry - Matthew Gabriele and David M. Perry, *The Bright Ages: A New History of Medieval Europe*, First Harper Perennial edition (New York London Toronto Sydney New Delhi Auckland: Harper Perennial, 2022). In this work, the authors defy this common notion of medieval times as a *dark* period, offering a popular history with the Middle Ages as a period of “brilliant reflection of humanity itself” to put it as the authors did, evaluating these centuries with all its contradictions, as any other period had their own.

attempt to “depoliticize” the writing of history that has been increasingly noticeable within academies, especially in the last four decades;¹⁵ the second, possibly more notorious and more relevant, regards the perception of the Middle Ages by historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with different ideological outlooks, who either disregard this period (the left) or romanticize it (the right).

As will come as no surprise to anyone, the contemporary era, especially the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is highly discussed among academics from the most varied ideological backgrounds, who convey a profoundly different perspective on this historical time from each other. However, the medieval period does not seem to be (nowadays, and especially for the Portuguese case) so widely disputed in ideological terms and is studied (tendentially) from a conservative perspective, which claims a position of “ideological exemption” that is naturally false, and (because it is conservative) doesn’t propose any *revolutionary* way of looking to the past. With some exceptions, the medieval period is, for the majority of the “historiographic left”, a time of regression or social paralysis, which is why its absence from the study of this era is notable (generally speaking). In general terms, conservative sectors of society regard the Middle Ages with a certain nostalgia for a period where *order* prevailed, according to Christian values and ethics; progressive sectors see this historical time as a period of obscurantism. Such an interpretation of the medieval past, notoriously mistaken, translates into the level of appreciation that the left and right within the generality of civil society tend to attribute to this past, with a greater appreciation by the right-wing sectors, especially by a neo-fascist right, which has increasingly used a historical reading of this time to assert its projects of civilizational regression.¹⁶

¹⁵ The fall of the USSR and the so-called “Soviet bloc” plays a fundamental role here, considering the relevance of Marxist dialectical materialism for the dominant historiographic approach within the Soviet Union. Equally important seems the affirmation of capitalism as a unique model of political, economic, and social organization and, above all, the victory of neoliberal regimes throughout the global West from the end of the 1980s, which naturally influenced societies and, consequently, those who dedicate themselves to the study of the past.

¹⁶ “Indeed, and here we enter into some rather dark territory, a lot of politically-inclined groups really do seem to like the newfound flexibility of such a conception of the Middle Ages. In particular, as indicated above, the Middle Ages have become among the most favoured sites of identity among far-right, alt-right and overtly neo-Nazi groups. (...) Likewise, ideas about the Middle Ages have even been used in defence of mass murder in the case of Anders Behring

In terms of academic production, this gap in the appreciation of the medieval period is also notable. If we take as an example some authors, such as Eric Hobsbawm (1917-2012), a well-known Marxist historian, and his study of “pre-political”,¹⁷ communities and social movements, or even the considerations about the medieval past by Jürgen Habermas (1929-), member of the *Frankfurt School*, namely on the non-existence of a “public sphere” in the medieval world,¹⁸ we understand to a certain extent the devaluation of this historical time within the “academic left”. This situation might lead one to consider the Middle Ages, therefore, as a reactionary period, which can only be sustained not by an analysis of that time, but rather by the discourse of our contemporaneity, especially given the fact that this period has served multiple reactionary projects during the twentieth century, and it is still a recurring theme in political discourse (especially related to reactionary parties and organizations).

As Christian Amalvi presents in his chapter *The Middle Ages: support for a counter-revolutionary and reactionary ideology, 1830-1944*, the Middle Ages were widely used by right-wing and extreme-right political forces throughout the final period of the nineteenth century and until the puppet Republic of Vichy, led by Philippe Pétain, in France, occupied by Nazi Germany. The same can be said about the Nazi regime in Germany, in the 1930s and 40s, which supported some of their own nationalistic views and projects by resurrecting specific historical moments or figures, as suggested by William J. Diebold in his work *The Nazi Middle Ages*¹⁹.

Breivik, the Norwegian who in 2011 launched what he called a new crusade, killing 77 unarmed people, mostly teenagers. The list goes on: the English Defence League, the True Finns, the Soldiers of Odin, and the so-called alt-right and neo-Nazis have all at some stage or another claimed legitimacy from medieval ideas” Elliott, ‘#Medieval’.

¹⁷ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, The Norton Library N328 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1965).

¹⁸ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Burgeois Society* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1991).

¹⁹ William J. Diebold, ‘The Nazi Middle Ages,’ in *Whose Middle Ages?* (Fordham University Press, 2019), 104–15, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780823285594-012>.

In a chronological arc divided into four distinct moments,²⁰ Amalvi identifies the main lines that guided modern²¹ French thought about the medieval period in an intimate connection with the social and political developments that characterized *modernity*. In his study, we understand how the Middle Ages served counter-revolutionary and reactionary movements, from the advent of nationalist ideas in the nineteenth century to the period when France, occupied by the Nazis, promoted an attempt to restore Christian ethical and moral standards which meant the reversion of fundamental rights and freedoms, through persecution, imprisonment, and imposition of forced labor on various groups in French society.

The growth of antisemitism in Europe in the beginning of the twentieth century, well-known in Germany, but not exclusive to this region (in France as well, for instance), tried also to support itself by harbouring this reactionary view of the medieval past, resorting to multiple memorable historical personalities. This was the case, for instance, of Joan of Arc, captured by the conservative ideological currents in France, with straight ties to the Catholic Church (which canonized Joan of Arc in 1920 and she is currently one of France's patron saints). Reading this historical figure as some sort of "national

²⁰ "In our contribution, we look at how and why Catholic elites used the idealized Middle Ages in this way, brandishing it as a weapon against revolutionary modern times accused, by smashing the social unity of the Ancien Régime, of having left the individual alone and isolated against an all-powerful State. We will analyse this veritable Catholic crusade against the France stemming from the Revolution in four successive sequences:

1. The period of nostalgia for the Middle Ages reconstructed in the colours of Romanticism, from about 1830 to 1860.
2. The time of Frédéric Le Play, from 1860 to 1890, when the Middle Ages was reclaimed by the social science developed by this former mining engineer.
3. The medieval crusade under the banner of Joan of Arc undertaken against the parliamentary, lay, masonic Republic of the years 1890 to 1940.
4. A dream of the restoration of Christianity under Vichy, which eventually became a nightmare." Amalvi, 'Chapter 19. The Middle Ages,' 413–14.

²¹ Consider the philosophical definition of *modernity*, rather than the traditional historiographical barrier between the modern and the contemporary (the French Revolution of 1789), in obvious need of redefinition, as Reinhart Koselleck accurately presented. (Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society*, Reprint, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2015). The concept of *modernity* presented here deals with the period of liberal revolutions from the end of the eighteenth century and the entire nineteenth century until the period of the rise of Nazi-fascism, in the 1930s.

hero", responsible for the expulsion of the "foreign scum", as it has been written by Charles Maurras (1868-1952),²² among whom we could find Jews and the "enemies of religion and country".²³

In Nazi Germany, the Middle Ages also played a fundamental role specifically in the building of its ideological project from a perspective that, according to William J. Diebold, transcended the academic limits.²⁴ In this geographical and historiographical context, the spotlight falls on Heinrich, Duke of the Saxons and later their king (after the year 919). Heinrich was perceived by the Nazis as the "first king of the Germans" or of "Germany". The rhetoric behind the use of this historical figure becomes, therefore, clear by "proving" the existence of some kind of "nation" or at least of "nationality" in this medieval past sought to, among other things, underline the excellence and racial superiority of the German people, as espoused by the Nazi regime. In the attempt to glorify this supposedly "national" figure, Himmler and the SS's agents promoted a series of re-readings of the medieval past to transform the image of duke Heinrich (and in doing so, they would also transform the collective image of their time concerning this medieval figure), namely by transforming the church where his tomb could be found. It was a Gothic church (which was a style associated with France) transformed into a building that should resemble the aesthetic lines of the Romanesque (a more austere

²² French poet, a known nationalist and one of the responsible for the foundation of *Action Française*, a counter-revolutionary movement that supported the restauration of the French monarchy and defended the integralist doctrine (political doctrine of catholic inspiration), which influenced several nationalist movements throughout Europe, as it was the Portuguese case; Salazar (the Portuguese dictator) might have read and studied Maurras, according to a study presented by Marcos Pinho de Escobar- Marcos Pinho de Escobar, *Perfiles Maurrasianos en Oliveira Salazar* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Buen Combate, 2014).

²³ "[Joan of Arc] deals pitilessly with the Jews, the Freemasons, the English, enemies of her religion and her country, and (because) above all she stigmatizes the executioners, the judges of the heroine and, in particular, Bishop Cauchon, whom she declares was a converted Jew who sold out to the English" Charles Maurras cited in Amalvi, 'Chapter 19. The Middle Ages,' 417.

²⁴ "The very name of their regime evoked the medieval past because they believed their Third Reich ("Empire") was the rebirth of a first German Empire that originated in the tenth century. One sign of how important the Middle Ages were to the Nazis was how much time and money some leading Nazis put into medieval studies: Both Alfred Rosenberg, the Party's chief ideologist, and Heinrich Himmler, the head of the Schutzstaffel (the SS, the Nazi Party police and military) were devotees." Diebold, 'The Nazi Middle Ages,' 105.

and “simple” style, which was supposed to be better identifiable with their understanding of the “German”).²⁵

Even among the Iberian fascist dictatorships throughout the twentieth century, the most recent studies make evident how the medieval past was constantly referred to when trying to build the nationalistic rhetoric inherent to these regimes. Looking at the Portuguese case, this becomes clear right from the start of the fascist dictatorship (in 1933), when Salazar (the dictator) was referred to as some kind of “national hero”, alongside other historical figures, such as king Afonso I.²⁶ One of the most well-known cases in this context is the portrait of Salazar as “saviour of the fatherland” in a propaganda campaign by the fascist regime, where the dictator is portrayed with a medieval armour, shield and sword (like the most famous statue of Afonso I), and on the shield one can read: “Tudo pela Nação, nada contra a Nação” (in English: “Everything for the Nation, Nothing against the Nation”); below this image one can read: “Ditosa Pátria que tais filhos tem” (in English: “Blessed Fatherland that has such children”).²⁷

The same argument can be used to refer to the Spanish fascist dictatorship (1936-1975). Here, like in the previous cases, the Middle Ages played a central role in affirming the nationalistic view of *franquismo*, with clear purposes of state propaganda, like it has been pointed out by many scholars, such as Diego Vicente Sánchez.²⁸ In this context it becomes even more clear how central this

²⁵ “The problem with the Gothic for Himmler and the SS was that they perceived it to be a “French” style (and the earliest Gothic buildings are, indeed, in what is modern-day France). For them, this made the Gothic totally inappropriate for a building housing the tomb of the first “German” king. The simplicity and strength of the Romanesque, by contrast, were perceived to be essentially German.” Diebold, 109.

²⁶ This king is usually referred to as the first king of Portugal, however recent studies have been indicating that his mother Teresa already used the title of *regina* (queen) of Portugal in several official documents of the time. About this historical figure, see a recent biography written by Luís Carlos Amaral and Mário Jorge Barroca, where the authors give a much clear image of her role as countess and queen: Luís Carlos Amaral and Mário Jorge Barroca, *Teresa: a condessa-rainha*, 1.a edição, Rainhas de Portugal (Lisboa: Temas e Debates, 2020).

²⁷ The book of João Medina, *Salazar, Hitler and Franco*, refers to this image as a postcard produced around 1935, used to portray the dictator as a national icon, in a mythical way, like it had been done in other European dictatorships at the time. João Medina, *Salazar, Hitler e Franco: estudos sobre Salazar e a ditadura*, Horizonte histórico (Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 2000).

²⁸ Diego Vicente Sánchez, *La Edad Media franquista: el pasado medieval hispánico en la memoria histórica del franquismo y la legitimación del nuevo régimen*, 1a edición (Cáceres: Universidad de Extremadura, 2023).

discourse around the medieval “reconquest” and “crusades” in the Iberian Peninsula were for the fascist regime, in their fight against alleged “new infidels”,²⁹ much like the far-right and neofascist movements in current day Spain. In the same way, as Vicente Sánchez shows, the image of Francisco Franco (the dictator, or as he was called at the time, the *caudillo*) was built and emphasized in a historical perspective, based mainly on the Castilian warlords from the Middle Ages onward,³⁰ praising the “fatherland heroes” that preceded Franco.³¹

The question posed here is not, therefore, if the Middle Ages were or were not a *reactionary* period. That argument is purely based on a perception of this historical period throughout the late nineteenth century and almost the entire twentieth century, which was largely captured by specific political factions (with a special emphasis on the right-wing and Fascist/Nazi movements), as we have seen. This appropriation, nonetheless, seems to play an interesting role in the way society as a whole perceives the Middle Ages, whence we cannot exclude the historians or, more broadly, the academic community. This may help explain some sort of abandonment of the Middle Ages that can be noted among the “academic left”, even if this is not (at all) an absolute rule.

1383-85 in the twentieth-century Portuguese Historiography

Medieval crises and revolutions in the twentieth century Western European historiography

Western European historiography, or better said historiography about Western European history, was not immune to conceptual discussions regarding the late Middle Ages. Outside of Portugal, several authors clashed over the concept of *revolution* and its applicability to pre-modern periods, especially before the French Revolution in 1789. The main argument was that the concept of *revolution* was not equal throughout history, and it meant very

²⁹ Sánchez, 53–74.

³⁰ The very concept of *caudillo* has medieval origins, meaning “the head”, which could be referred to political or military leaders. It was even used by other twentieth-century dictators all over the Latin America, as was the case of Fulgencio Batista (Cuba), Getúlio Vargas (Brazil), or Augusto Pinochet (Chile), just to mention the most well-known.

³¹ Sánchez, *La Edad Media franquista*, 99–112.

different things for distinct civilizations. It referred to the movements of change in political regimes for the Greeks,³² and a moment of return for the Romans,³³ it was used (the concept of *revolutio*, in Latin) by some authors in the Middle Ages and the so-called Renaissance to refer to the movement of celestial bodies.³⁴ And it became largely known as a moment of violent rupture with the past after the Industrial Revolution, and especially after the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, with all the revolutionary movements that swept the globe. The latter conception of *revolution* is highly marked by the Marxist school of thought and its way of analyzing the past, and for that reason, it is not strange that among the two main lines of thought that divided the conceptual discussions regarding the late Middle Ages, one of them had a clear influence of this historiographical school, where we should highlight the role played by the *Communist Party Historians' Group* (British)³⁵. In any case, it must be said that until the 1970s

³² Considering, for example, its use by Aristotle, in *Politics* - Aristotle, *Politics*, Loeb Classical Library 264 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1944).

³³ As stated in the work of Reinhart Koselleck: "In 1842, a French scholar made a historically instructive observation. Haréau recalled what had at the time been forgotten: that our expression actually signified a return, a rotation of movement back to a point of departure, as in the original Latin usage. In keeping with its lexical sense, revolution initially signified circulation." (Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2004), 45.

³⁴ As is the case in Copernicus book *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*. In this case, we can notice as well the relation between *revolutio* and the circular movement presented above.

³⁵ This group included many renowned British historians who helped shape not only Anglophone historiography, but also influenced other historiographical schools across Europe and beyond. Among its key figures were Eric Hobsbawm (1917-2012), Maurice Dobb (1900-1976), Christopher Hill (1912-2003), Edward Palmer Thompson (1924-1993), Dona Torr (1883-1957), Raphael Samuel (1934-1996), Rodney Hilton (1916-2002), George Rudé (1910-1993) and Dorothy Thompson (1923-2011). Their extensive contributions advanced the field of social history, particularly the so-called "history from below", which centred on marginalized and lower-class perspectives, often neglected in traditional historiography. The influence of Marxist thought on their work was undeniable (after all, they were members of the British Communist Party). However, while groundbreaking, their framework drew criticism for overemphasizing *class struggle* at the expense of cultural or gendered analyses, a gap later addressed by *New Left* historians. Among their most enduring legacies is the founding of the journal *Past & Present* (1952), still published today by Oxford Academic. However, the Soviet invasion of Hungary (1956) and the revelations about Joseph Stalin's authoritarian rule led most members to leave the Communist Party of Great Britain. This marked the group's gradual decline, though their impact endured long after the CPGB's dissolution in 1991. A testament to their legacy, Eric Hobsbawm reflected on the group's spirit in a 1978 essay, published in *Rebels and Their Causes: Essays in Honour of A.L. Morton* (also member

and 80s, it was common and somehow accepted to refer to medieval and early-modern *revolutions*, however, in the last decades this use seems to have been abandoned by historians who analyze this historical past, largely due to the influence of the development and influence of the cultural history and the history of the concepts and language.³⁶ Here, we tried to analyze the main discussions among some historians in the last decades of the twentieth century, focusing only on the west-European historiography and, obviously, on a handful of scholars.

In any case, we must make clear our position in this debate. It is, for us, undoubtedly possible (and we should also say necessary) to apply the concept of *revolution* to pre-modern societies and revolutionary experiences, some of them taking place in the late Middle Ages. However, this argument must be accompanied by a definition of the concept, for us to make clear what we mean by *revolution*. In this sense, we follow the Marxist understanding of the concept, that of a moment when a tension becomes evident, or to use a Marxist concept, a *contradiction* between the *forces of production* (the processes of labour) and the *social relations of production* (the relationship between the workers and the capitalists, or the bourgeoisie).³⁷ From a Marxist

of this group): Eric Hobsbawm, 'The Historians' Group of the Communist Party,' in *Rebels and Their Causes: Essays in Honour of A.L. Morton*, ed. Maurice Cornforth (New York: Humanities Press, 1979), 21–48, <http://archive.org/details/rebelstheircause0000unse>. This essay, later made available online by Verso, offers a firsthand account of their influence and can be accessed here as well: https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/news/the-historians-group-of-the-communist-party?srltid=AfmBOoqlkfuW3OrPfHVRINFnHigDWd0mjerW043Cp-_BxAggPD7kIID.

³⁶ This has been pointed out by many scholars, among whom we should highlight Reinhart Koselleck, particularly in his book *Future Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*. Here the author provides us a reflection on the use of the concept of *revolution* and the historical criteria of its modern meaning. From the same author we should highlight his work *The Practice of Conceptual History. Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, where he dedicates a chapter to the conceptual history of *crisis* as well (Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781503619104>). It is his opinion that “the concept *revolution* is itself a linguistic product of our modernity”, and “that it is possible to distinguish political, social, technological, and industrial revolution has been accepted since the last century. Only since the French Revolution has the term *revolution*, of a “revolution” – or indeed whichever language one employs – assumed the kind of ambivalent and ubiquitous semantic potential outlined above.” Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 44.

³⁷ This theory is based on the interpretation of *social relations* by a structuralist school of thought (as is the Marxist school), and these have been interpreted in many different ways by other authors who followed a more individualist approach or an institutionalist one. On the subject of the

perspective (with which we agree), when these two forces become seriously disjointed, a revolution occurs and a new *system of production* is created, with different *social relations of production*. That is, in our view, what might have happened for instance in the late Middle Ages, which we consider to be a revolutionary period that marked the beginning of the fall of feudalism and the rise of a new social, political and economic order that we know today by the name of capitalism (obviously in a long historical development until our contemporaneity).³⁸

Back to the Western European historiography, in 1972, Guy Fourquin (1923-1988) published his work *Les soulèvements populaires au Moyen Âge*.³⁹ Right from the title, the author indicates his refusal to call these popular movements *revolutions*, as do, for example, Michel Mollat and Philippe Wolff in their 1970 work.⁴⁰ However, if there were any doubts about such refusal, the author quickly clarified it in the first lines of the introduction to this book. He states: "It was deliberately that I chose the term uprising and rejected the term *revolution*. For the latter, whose meaning has changed since the eighteenth century, currently carries a meaning that is in no way suitable for the Middle Ages, nor even for modern times".⁴¹ And also: "Everything changed with the Revolution of 1789, and then with Marxism. From then on, the term came to imply a value judgment: the French Revolution, the revolution predicted by Marx, were good events in themselves".⁴² From this, we understand the clear

concept of *revolution* in the Marxist thought, we should highlight the work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Germany* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Company, 1907), and also an analysis of the theory of revolution by Hal Draper, in a work published in five volumes (Hal Draper, *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution*, 5 vols (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977).

³⁸ This is an argument we do not expect to prove in this small and limited study, but it is something we consider to address in our PhD thesis, that should become public in the next years.

³⁹ Guy Fourquin, *Les Soulèvements Populaires Au Moyen Âge* (Paris : Presses universitaires de France, 1972).

⁴⁰ Michel Mollat and Philippe Wolff, *The Popular Revolutions of the Late Middle Ages* (London; New York: Routledge, 2022).

⁴¹ (our translation) Original text: "C'est à dessein qu'a été choisi le terme de soulèvement et rejeté celui de révolution. Car ce dernier mot, dont le sens s'est modifié depuis le XVIII^e siècle, est maintenant porteur d'une signification qui ne convient aucunement pour le Moyen Âge ni, même, pour les Temps modernes." Fourquin, *Les Soulèvements Populaires Au Moyen Âge*, 5.

⁴² (our translation) Original text: "Tout a changé avec la Révolution de 1789, puis avec le marxisme. Dorénavant, le terme a impliqué un jugement de valeur : la Révolution française, la révolution prédite par Marx étaient des événements bons en soi." Fourquin, 6.

perception of the influence of the French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century and Marxist ideology on the way of understanding *revolution* in a conceptual model (based on historical practice) that necessarily prevents us from applying such a concept to any time before 1789.

Along with Fourquin, we can find other authors not necessarily linked exclusively to the study of the Middle Ages but with relevant considerations about the applicability of the concept of *revolution* to times before 1789, such as Yves-Marie Bercé (1936-), a prominent French historian and auto proclaimed “right-wing anarchist”. Specializing his research in the history of popular movements and their mentalities, between 1974 and 1980 he released two works that seem to us to be the most relevant to the issue at hand.⁴³ Bercé also rejects, in the last work, the theoretical or legal notion of *revolution* for the historical times he deals with, affirming the possibility of formulating a typology of political violence, even though, according to Perez Zagorin, he does not do so in a clear way.⁴⁴

In direct opposition to Marxist thought and the method of historical analysis of Marxist historians, Alfred Cobban (1901-1968) also appears as a relevant reference in this context of *conservative* historiography, favoring a vision ideologically closer to classical liberalism. In his publication *The Myth of the French Revolution*,⁴⁵ Cobban opposes the Marxist vision of profound social transformation after the Revolution of 1789, defending a notion of little or no transformation, a vision repeated in other works.⁴⁶ Cobban, although he is not a medievalist or deals in any way with the history of medieval

⁴³ Yves-Marie Bercé, *Croquants et Nu-Pieds. Les Soulèvements Paysans En France Du XVIe Au XIXe Siècle* (Paris : Gallimard, 1974); Yves-Marie Bercé, *Révoltes et Révolutions Dans l'Europe Moderne* (Paris : Presses universitaires de France, 1980).

⁴⁴ “Bercé disdains the notion of a theory or laws of revolution but believes it possible to formulate a typology of political violence. If so, this typology does not appear clearly, nor are its principles explained in this book. Two chapters are given over to peasant wars, although these refer to other types of events as well. The remaining chapters deal with many sorts of revolts without regard to typological distinction.” Perez Zagorin, ‘[Review of Revolt and Revolution in Early Modern Europe: An Essay on the History of Political Violence, by Yves-Marie Bercé],’ *The American Historical Review* 94, no. 1 (1989): 120–21.

⁴⁵ Alfred Cobban, *The Myth of the French Revolution* (Folcroft: Folcroft Library Editions, 1970).

⁴⁶ Alfred Cobban, *Historians and the Causes of the French Revolution* (London: Historical Association, 1958); Alfred Cobban, *The Debate on the French Revolution, 1789-1800* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1961); Alfred Cobban, *The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Europe, presents nevertheless a relevant contribution to the discussion on the applicability of the concept of *revolution* to realities before 1789 due to his critical position on the dominant thought among Marxist historiography of his time, with a focus on the treatment of the contours of the French Revolution.

This author is also relevant in another historian's work, placed in the opposite line to those mentioned until now. It is the case of Georges Rudé (1910-1993), a British historian and a member of the *Communist Party Historians' Group*.⁴⁷ His work is fundamental to this discussion, especially his PhD thesis⁴⁸ and, released three years later, the work *The Crowd in the French Revolution*.⁴⁹ Throughout his work, the influence of the *Annales School* movement is notable due to his choice of writing a popular history, from the People's point of view and not the elites, a "history from below".⁵⁰ This is precisely the novelty of his work, and that is why it deserves to be highlighted. The light that Rudé offers to the role played by historical subjects often ignored by contemporary historiography allows us to broaden our understanding of *revolution*, discussing not only administrative structures and their members (and their change or permanence) but also popular participation in these revolutionary movements, which would not necessarily be dictated by adherence to an ideological vision, but rather based on their material living conditions and the needs that, as part

⁴⁷ In his study of the work of George Rudé as a historian of Australia, James Friguglietti reports on the obstacles encountered by Rudé within the British academy due to his activity in the Communist Party, referring to the accusations that were circulating at the time about the role of the supervisor of his PhD thesis (Alfred Cobban, known conservative) in blocking Rudé's access to a position at the University: "Some friends of Rudé have blamed his thesis advisor Alfred Cobban, a political conservative, for blocking any university appointment, but formal proof has never been offered." and "Eric Hobsbawm makes this accusation in Christopher Hill, George Rudé, 1910-1993: Marxist Historian (London, 1993). Rudé himself never publicly blamed Cobban and contributed an article, "The Growth of Cities and Popular Revolt, 1750-1859," to the Festschrift dedicated to him. See J. F. Bosher, ed. Essays in Memory of Alfred Cobban (London, 1973), 166-190" James Friguglietti, 'A Scholar "in Exile": George Rudé as a Historian of Australia,' *French History and Civilization: Papers from the George Rudé Seminar*, 2005.

⁴⁸ *The Parisian Wage-Earning Population and the Insurrectionary Movements of 1789-91*. Title collected from Friguglietti, 4.

⁴⁹ George Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).

⁵⁰ To understand this historiographical perspective, see the works developed by Edward Palmer Thompson - Edward Palmer Thompson, 'History from Below,' *The Times Literary Supplement*, 7 April 1966. -, Staughton Lynd - Staughton Lynd, *Doing History from the Bottom up: On E.P. Thompson, Howard Zinn, and Rebuilding the Labor Movement from Below* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2014) - and Christopher Hill, as we shall see.

of a collective, they understood they had. In *Ideology and Popular Protest*,⁵¹ Rudé presents and analyzes several popular revolt movements, starting from the Middle Ages to absolutist Europe. His analysis of the popular revolts of the Middle Ages, especially of its final period, identify some type of “protest ideology” in these movements, based on Antonio Gramsci’s texts on *counter-hegemony*.⁵² However, the author dedicates special attention only to the English and German cases, although he does not forget other spaces, especially in Western Europe (like France or northern Italy).

Along with George Rudé, we can find other authors such as Christopher Hill, whose works focused on the historical investigation of the British seventeenth century, especially the 1640 Puritan Revolution. In his works, one can observe a historical analysis that follows the interpretative precepts of Marxism, considering the seventeenth century as a period of revolutionary transformation of English institutions, overthrowing what remained of the feudal regime and opening space for the assertion of capitalism in this region.⁵³ For the author, this century is remarkable for political, economic, and social development precisely due to the revolutionary character of the people of this territory at the time. As he warns us in his introduction to *The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714*,⁵⁴ not only a constitutional transformation or political forces would conflict, but rather two somewhat antagonistic visions of civilizational organization:

⁵¹ George Rudé, *Ideology and Popular Protest* (North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

⁵² Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*.

⁵³ The author himself states this position in his introduction to *The English Revolution 1640: an essay*, writing: “The object of this essay is to suggest an interpretation of the events of the seventeenth century different from that which most of us were taught at school. To summarise it briefly, this interpretation is that the English Revolution of 1640-60 was a great social movement like the French Revolution of 1789. (...) The Civil War was a class war, in which the despotism of Charles I was defended by the reactionary forces of the established Church and conservative landlords. Parliament beat the King because it could appeal to the enthusiastic support of the trading and industrial classes in town and countryside, to the yeomen and progressive gentry, and to wider masses of the population whenever they were able by free discussion to understand what the struggle was really about.” Christopher Hill, *The English Revolution 1640: An Essay* (Southampton: The Camelot Press, 1979), 6. Regarding the contours of the Revolution of 1640 and its interpretation by Christopher Hill, I also suggest the fifth chapter of his work *People and Ideas in 17th-century England*, the third volume of the collection *The Collected Essays of Christopher Hill* - Christopher Hill, ‘A Bourgeois Revolution?’, in *People and Ideas in 17th-Century England* (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1987), 94–124.

⁵⁴ Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution, 1603-1714* (London: Routledge, 2001).

one following the French absolutist model, the other following the model of the United Provinces of the Netherlands.⁵⁵

One of the founders of the *Communist Party Historians' Group* and also a prominent figure in the present debate is Rodney Hilton, a British medievalist, who stood out for his various works on the English peasants throughout the Middle Ages, with a focus on the rising of 1381, often revisited by British historiography. His perspective, using a Marxist historical approach, allowed a renewed analysis of this historical moment, with a clear influence of other historians such as Marc Bloch and Georges Duby throughout his works.⁵⁶ Even though the work is considered somewhat dated, *Bond Men Made Free* continues to be one of the most relevant studies for understanding this historical moment, also standing out for its innovative perspective and considerations (namely regarding the existence of social classes in a pre-industrial society⁵⁷). In his work, Hilton deals with the studies carried out up to that point, namely the work of Michel Mollat and Philippe Wolff, considering their conclusions somewhat insufficient. On the one hand, the general nature of the work, not focusing on any specific space but seeking to establish a general panorama of European medieval urban history, would, according to Rodney Hilton, make it hard to create an exercise sufficiently capable of understanding the various contours of popular movements analyzed by the two authors,

⁵⁵ "The transformation that took place in the seventeenth century is then far more than merely a constitutional or political revolution, or a revolution in economics, religion, or taste. It embraces the whole of life. Two conceptions of civilisation were in conflict. One took French absolutism for its model, the other the Dutch Republic. The object of this book is to try to understand the changes which set England on the path of Parliamentary government, economic advance and imperialist foreign policy, of religious toleration and scientific progress." Hill, 4–5.

⁵⁶ This influence is mentioned by Christopher Dyer, responsible for writing the introduction to Rodney Hilton's work (in the 2003 edition). Dyer, who had been a student of Hilton, writes: "His work was informed by ideas such as class conflict and the transition from feudalism to capitalism, but his application of Marxism was not dogmatic, and he tested the theories by empirical research. He had an international outlook and was strongly influenced in particular by French historians such as Marc Bloch and Georges Duby." Christopher Dyer, 'A New Introduction,' in *Bond Men Made Free: Medieval Peasant Movements and the English Rising of 1381* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2003), VIII.

⁵⁷ Regarding the definition of *social class* in Rodney Hilton's work and its applicability to the medieval peasants of the English kingdom, see the first chapter of the work *Bond Men Made Free*, entitled "The Nature of Medieval Peasant Economy": Rodney Hilton, *Bond Men Made Free: Medieval Peasant Movements and the English Rising of 1381* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2003), 24–61.

resulting in vague conclusions. On the other hand, one must also consider a hypothesis launched by Hilton: dividing the medieval millennium into three distinct phases, assuming the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as the third phase of this period, characterized as a “breaking point” in the social tensions that had been occurring since the second phase of the Middle Ages (between eleventh and fourteenth centuries), exacerbated by the consequences of mortality caused by diseases and pestilences that devastated the European continent during this period.⁵⁸ Given his analysis of medieval documentation and popular involvement in the movements that led to the rising of 1381, Rodney Hilton does not classify it as a *revolution*, as he understands that the leaders of the movement may not have had a clear vision of a power structure with which they would replace the current structure. However, the author considers that they may have intended some transformations that, considering the *order* at the time, could in some way be seen as *revolutionary*.⁵⁹

Another work by Rodney Hilton also seems relevant in this context since the author presents the decay of the feudal regime and its gradual replacement by capitalism, which undoubtedly constitutes a process of transformation of the social order, a *revolution*. In *Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism: essays in Medieval Social History*,⁶⁰ Hilton exposes the class conflict between the peasant population and the property owners, who appropriated the agricultural

⁵⁸ Hilton, XXIII–XXIV.

⁵⁹ “It cannot be said that the rebel leaders of 1381 had a sophisticated or elaborate or well worked out or (above all) realizable vision of what could be put in the place of the social order they were attacking. Nor can it be said that the mass of their followers shared more than some of their long-term ends, though this is true of rebellious and revolutionary movements at all times. Nevertheless, a not altogether incoherent picture emerges, simple though it is. They seem to have envisaged a people’s monarchy (or monarchies) in which there would be no intermediary between the king and his people, that is, no class of landowning nobles and gentry controlling law and administration. Similarly, there would be a people’s church whose basic unit would be the parish, again with no intermediate hierarchy between Christians and the single bishop or archbishop who, as head of the church was the ecclesiastical equivalent of the people’s king. Somehow the people would make the law and administer justice. In spite of Froissart’s version of John Ball’s sermon, it is unlikely that it was believed that all things should be held in common. A regime of family ownership of peasant holdings and artisan workshops, with the large scale landed property of the church and the aristocracy divided among the peasants, was probably envisaged. Little emerges as to a rebel programme for the towns. One suspects that it was thought by the rural element among the rebel leaders that they would continue an independent existence as self-governing corporations.” Hilton, 227.

⁶⁰ Rodney Hilton, *Class Conflict and the Crisis of Feudalism: Essays in Medieval Social History*, Rev. 2nd ed (London: The Hambledon Press, 1985).

surplus produced by the first class. Here, the author considers that we could perceive a revolutionary potential in medieval society, fundamentally led by the peasants, the “anti-feudal class”. For Hilton, only this class could truly present itself as *revolutionary* since only their struggle could disturb the *order* of the entire society. According to the author, urban struggles (led by merchants and/or artisans) would not have such a far-reaching impact. Merchants would not represent any threat to the feudal order, and on the other hand, artisans would have a range of interests that were too divergent between the various artisanal crafts and between the hierarchical structure within the same crafts. This circumstance leads the author to reject their eventual *revolutionary* role within medieval feudal society.⁶¹ His approach, however, is limited by his interpretation of historical events that took place in the English medieval kingdom.

Finally, it seems also relevant to mention the works of Jacques Le Goff (1924-2014), a prominent French medievalist, and member of the *Annales School*, particularly significant in its third phase or generation (alongside Pierre Nora). In 1977, Le Goff published a brilliant reflection on the social construction and understanding of *time*, based on the social relations of production and mostly on the division of labour.⁶² In this work, the author deals with the social notion of *time* and how it transformed during the Middle Ages (from a Christian notion to a more secular one), to reach several conclusions, namely his considerations on the beginning of the fourteenth century *crisis*. In his interpretation, this moment is a reflection of the social tension accumulated around the labour journey: workers were asking for more hours of labour (the only way of increasing their wages), but the *bourgeois* (or in other words, the employers, the ones who controlled the means of production) wanted the exact opposite.⁶³ From this social contradiction, occurs

⁶¹ Hilton, 155–58.

⁶² Jacques le Goff, *Time, Work, & Culture in the Middle Ages*, Nachdr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

⁶³ “From the end of the thirteenth century, this system of labor time found itself under challenge and entered upon a crisis: an emphasis on night work and, most important, harshness in the definition, measurement, and use of the working day, as well as social conflicts over the duration of work—such was the form taken by the general crisis of the fourteenth century in this particular domain. Here as elsewhere, general progress went hand in hand with serious difficulties of adaptation. Labor time was transformed along with most other social conditions; it was made more precise and efficient, but the change was not a painless one. Curiously, it was at first the

a wage crisis, which meant the rising of the living cost (higher prices and lower real wages). That situation led eventually to a new *time*, highly marked by the social tensions that characterized the final centuries of the Middle Ages.⁶⁴ In the fifteenth century it becomes evident, for the author, that the workers' struggle motif resides precisely in the duration of a work day.⁶⁵

The Revolution of 1383-85 in the twentieth-century Portuguese historiography

As one might understand, this conceptual debate also reperculated in the Portuguese academic community. Even considering the fascist dictatorship (and all that meant to the Portuguese academic life), it was not impossible to be aware of what was being discussed outside of the Portuguese borders. This reflection departs precisely from our understanding that the majority of Portuguese historiography seems to have found a relative consensus in the use of terms that do not seem to be the most appropriate for medieval analysis: that of *crisis*. Nonetheless, this apparent common conceptual choice deserves our attention, above all to explain the reasons for the disagreement and present, based on the work of other historians, the concepts considered to be most appropriate and their significance for the study of the late medieval period, with emphasis on the revolution of 1383-85. As one can understand, therefore, it is our understanding that this specific moment was, indeed, a *revolution* rather than a *crisis*.⁶⁶

workers themselves who asked that the working day be lengthened. In fact, this was a way of increasing wages, what we would today call a demand for overtime. (...) Before long, however, a contrary sort of demand arose. In response to the crisis, employers sought to regulate the working day more closely and to combat workers' cheating in this area. It was at this time that the proliferation of work bells noted by Bilfinger occurred." Goff, 45.

⁶⁴ "at least in the cloth manufacturing cities, the town was burdened with a new time, the time of the cloth makers. This time indicated the dominance of a social category. It was the time of the new masters. It was a time which belonged to a group hard hit by the crisis but in a period of progress for society as a whole. The new time soon became a stake in bitter social conflicts. Worker uprisings were subsequently aimed at silencing the *Werkglocke*." Goff, 46.

⁶⁵ "It is clear that in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the duration of the working day rather than the salary itself was the stake in the workers' struggles." Goff, 47.

⁶⁶ Its contours, although relevant, will not be exhaustively analyzed in this study, for it is not its purpose, however we shall allude to some aspects of this historical moment (whenever

Several authors from the end of the nineteenth century analyzed this historical moment as a point of transformation in Portuguese political and social life, describing it as a *revolution*. It is the case, for example, of António Caetano do Amaral (1747-1819)⁶⁷ or Oliveira Martins (1845-1894),⁶⁸ whose

necessary) to be able to understand the historiographical debate behind it. The death of King Fernando I (in 1383) and the struggle for dynastic succession that followed (1383-1385) has been a point of heated debate in Portuguese historiography over the twentieth century. The Portuguese historians have perceived it as a *revolution* and other times as a *crisis*. We must problematize both concepts to understand how to apply them to this historical reality.

⁶⁷ Using the study carried out by Ricardo de Brito (our translation): “In the *Project* [of *A Civil History of the Portuguese Monarchy*, speech given by António Caetano de Amaral in 1780] he divides the history of Portugal into “epochs”, understanding that what separates each one are “great revolutions”, the result of crises. In his view, the “epochs” in Portuguese history are easily identifiable, with the first revolution taking place at the death of D. Fernando, “the great revolution that occurs due to the death of Lord King Dom Fernando gives natural beginning to another epoch”; and the second as a consequence of the death of D. Sebastião, “another revolution greater than the previous one”. As Fátima Sá e Melo Ferreira noted, despite Caetano do Amaral’s unusual conception of national history, which divided it into revolutions that marked the end of eras but which, at the same time, gave rise to others, the use of revolution referred, tending towards a conceptual approach of “disturbance” in the life of the State, therefore, the semantic innovation that we will see later is still far away. However, this vision of Caetano do Amaral appears to be one of the first examples in Portugal of the possibility of extending the concept of revolution (beyond its political, astronomical meaning, etc.) to historiographical discourse, making it an operative concept for periods still in the past compared to the time when such a term did not exist or would not have such an understanding.” Ricardo de Brito, ‘Uma aproximação às inovações no léxico político e social em Portugal na transição do século XVIII para o XIX: o caso do conceito de Revolução,’ *História: revista da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto* 6 (2016): 202–3.

⁶⁸ “D. Fernando’s time was a series of wars with the neighboring kingdom of Castile. The many misfortunes of these crazy plans had the benefit of definitively affirming the formal and positive independence of the nation, as seen in the battle of Aljubarrota. Like certain acute illnesses, when they attack a man with an indecisive temperament and weak constitution, at the age at which he reaches virility, and determine an organic revolution, fixing and consolidating health – this is how D. Fernando’s Castilian wars are, for Portugal, a crisis. His wavering destiny, his barely outlined organs, suffer the test of a violent commotion. The old, now anachronistic, temptations of the conquest of Galicia wake up again; the kingdom is invaded more than once; misery, ruin, devastation, and penury afflict, like a burning fever, the body of the nation. It certainly lacks a king to direct it, a strong man to represent and guide it; but this very thing contributes to characterizing the crisis, demonstrating that collective vitality already existed and did not come only from the strong imposition of a warlike arm. In two centuries, Portugal had become an amalgam of rural populations, whose unity was only in the genius of its barons, into an organism whose consciousness of a collective life was

works and historical readings influenced future generations, such as those analyzed here. However, not ignoring the ideological motivations that we can find behind their works, it seems relevant to us that the approaches and concepts used by these authors have undergone a profound change, or at least a bigger ideological dispute among the historians during the twentieth century.

The victory of the military coup of 1926, which led to a military dictatorship that later became the Portuguese *Estado Novo* had as one of its consequences that historiography would focus not only on new themes but above all on new perspectives, which shaped the way of writing history until our contemporary times.

On the preface to the chronicle of king João I of Portugal,⁶⁹ António Sérgio proposes an analysis of 1383-85 from the perspective of a revolution that was, according to this author, already in motion long before the death of the king Fernando I.⁷⁰ His observations, based on the text written by the

real and defined. Such, in our view, is the merit of this national revolution, whose supposed leader, the Master of Avis, is more the instrument than the hero." (our translation) J. P. de Oliveira Martins, *História de Portugal* (Guimarães: Guimarães editores, 2004), 87.

⁶⁹ This chronicle was written during the fifteenth century by Fernão Lopes and is the main source available in Portugal for the study of the Revolution of 1383, and for that reason it has been frequently used by many historians who wish to analyze this period. It is, as one would expect, a work paid by the Portuguese medieval Crown, and served specific purposes at the time, above all to bestow upon the new king (João I) and his new dynasty an unquestionable legitimacy, since the king was, after all, a bastard of the king Pedro I (1320-1367), and half-brother of the deceased king Fernando (1345-1383), who had a legitimate daughter, Beatriz of Portugal (1373-second decade of the 15th century), married to the Castilian king Juan I (1358-1390). Their marriage had been established by the peace treaty between the Portuguese and Castilian kingdoms in 1383, before Fernando's death, in Salvaterra de Magos (Portugal), ensuring, although, the succession of the Portuguese crown to the son who would be born out of this marriage. The study of this treaty is also possible mainly through the chronicle of king Fernando I, by the same author. António Sérgio addresses the issue of the revolution of 1383-85 in two distinct studies: the preface he wrote for this chronicle, first published between 1945 and 1949 - António Sérgio, 'Prefácio,' in *Crónica de D. João I* (Porto: Livraria Civilização, 1990) - and in a study entitled "Sobre a revolução de 1383-85" (in English, "On the 1383-85 revolution") - António Sérgio, 'Sobre a Revolução de 1383-85,' in *Obras Completas: Ensaios*, vol. VI, Clássicos Sá Da Costa - Nova Série (Lisboa: Sá da Costa, 1946), 123-42. His visions on this historical moment coincide in both texts.

⁷⁰ On the matter of the historical method of António Sérgio, he had clarified it in an article on one of the most famous journals in Portugal throughout the twentieth century, very relevant in the context of the ideological battle against the fascist regime - António Sérgio, 'Resposta a uma consulta,' *Seara Nova*, no. 466 (1936): 153-56.

chronicler, mention that the medieval text hints at a notion of a “new world” that was brought by the new Portuguese king (João I), strongly marked by the rise of a new generation, allegedly “low-born” people.⁷¹ It is, of course, a clear exaggeration of what might have happened, since as we can expect, the kingdom and its ruling elite did not know such a drastic change, at least from the social-economic point of view. It gives us, however, an interesting idea on the perception that the chronicler tried to convey: that of a breaking point in this kingdom’s history; a rupture, if we want. Either way, Sérgio clarifies that this revolution, set in motion after the death of the king Fernando, was already being prepared, or at least it had a motif that went far beyond the change of a king or dynasty: it was, for António Sérgio, a moment of light that shed over the *class struggle* that laid underneath the apparent order of the time. This struggle was pushed by the effects of the Plague, leading to the lack of working force (manpower), and subsequent deterioration of the wages,⁷² and at the same time the accumulation of wealth by *nouveau riche*: here lies the foundation for a labour crisis, for the contradiction between the *forces of production* and the *social relations of production*, ultimately, for a *revolution*.

But according to António Sérgio, who will find agreement among other historians, such as António Borges Coelho, we are not in the face of an essentially *popular* revolution. On the contrary, Sérgio argues that the revolutionary movement was in fact orchestrated by the bourgeoisie, the maritime bourgeoisie, who “in the shadow of the rights of the Master of Avis [later king João I]”, galvanized the *People* and led the political insurrection, seeking to control the political management of the realm, against the aristocratic political hegemony.⁷³

⁷¹ (our translation) “sons of men of such low condition that is better not to be said, by their good service and work in this time were made knights, calling themselves of new lineages and surnames” Fernão Lopes, cited in Sérgio, ‘Prefácio,’ XI.

⁷² (our translation) “As always happens, the largest proportion of victims was from the poorer layer of society: and to the diminishing of servants, in virtue of those who died, added those who got richer by the confluence of heritages due to them, and therefore abandoned the servant condition. The reader, that knows the law that correlates the prices with the intensity of supply and demand, easily foresees what came to happen: a wages revolution. There was a lack of manpower for working on the fields, and people tried to pay the old wage values. From this originates the economical conflict between the employers class and the workers class, – these demanding higher wages, or looking for more gratifying works; those trying to force the servants to serve for the payment imposed by the law.” Sérgio, XV.

⁷³ (our translation) “Such is (with or without reason) the hypothesis I propose to the interpretation of the phenomena: and if it is not too wrong, justifies the title of «bourgeois revolution» (the

This is actually a point of some disagreement among the historians who interpreted the historical moment of 1383-85 as a revolution. If on one hand both António Sérgio and António Borges Coelho perceive it as a *bourgeois* revolution, other historians have described it in different ways. Joel Serrão, for instance, understands this moment as divided into two: from 1383 to 1384 an essentially *popular* revolution, while from 1384 to 1385 the bourgeois capture of the revolutionary movement, transforming it into a *bourgeois* revolution in the end. Later, Jorge Borges de Macedo (1921-1996), in a very famous work regarding the alleged controversies of António Sérgio⁷⁴ also addresses this issue, criticising his approaches to the revolution of 1383. In other works, such as the one by Jaime Cortesão, we can understand a different perspective: that of a *national* revolution, which is, actually, the subtext of most of the historiographical approaches to this historical period, as we shall see.

First released in 1965, the work of António Borges Coelho,⁷⁵ generated a large discussion on this particular issue in the Portuguese historiography, being, until this day, one of the referential studies on the historical period it analyzes, even among those who do not agree with its author's interpretation.⁷⁶ In his work, the author starts by explaining the material conditions that laid the basis for the Revolution of 1383, with a thorough description of the Portuguese kingdom in the second half of the fourteenth century, considering what the author labelled it as "the agrarian Portugal" and "the maritime Portugal". In this section, the Marxist influence in Borges Coelho's method for

high bourgeoisie, of course, in opposition to the nobility and the *small* bourgeoisie «good men» [those who controlled the local city councils, who, according to António Sérgio, sided with the nobility]) which I have been giving to that crisis of 1383-85, so gracefully described by Fernão Lopes." Sérgio, XIII.

⁷⁴ Jorge Borges de Macedo, 'Significado e Evolução Das Polémicas de António Sérgio: A Ideologia Da Razão 1912-1930,' *Revista de História Das Ideias* 5 (1983): 471-531.

⁷⁵ For the sake of interpretative justice, we have chosen to analyze here the text contained in the first edition of Borges Coelho's book. Between 1965 and 2018 (date of the last edition of this book), António Borges Coelho has revised the text several times and added some information on other editions, most of them after the chronological arch of this study, without although changing structurally the interpretation he has done over the historical period under analysis. António Borges Coelho, *A Revolução de 1383: tentativa de caracterização e importância histórica* (Lisboa: Portugalia Editora, 1965).

⁷⁶ This work has been edited in six different moments, the last one of them in 2018, proving not only the high value and interest of the study carried out by António Borges Coelho, but also its relevance even nowadays, more than 50 years after its first edition.

the analysis of the past becomes clear, taking into account the dominant model of production and consumption and of political, social and economic organization: Feudalism. For the author, in the dusk of the Medieval ages there were two different kingdoms: one mainly agrarian, where the social relations of production of Feudalism had a clear impact on the organization of social life, and the other already more developed, where one could notice the development and growth of a new social class (the bourgeoisie), enriched by the exploitation of labour and with growing desires of political and social ascension.⁷⁷ In this last scenario, two cities become clearly the most prominent: Lisbon and Porto, with their surrounding areas.

Recalling a famous phrase written by Oliveira Martins, António Borges Coelho argues that “as soon as the coffin lid fell on king Fernando’s corpse, the Revolution broke out”. In his interpretation, all the material conditions and requirements for a revolution were laid during this reign, strongly marked by the effects of war on the social and economic life of the kingdom, the pillage of the fields’ riches by rich peasants and the urban bourgeoisie, and several popular protests against the noblemen and clergy.⁷⁸ For this author,

⁷⁷ (our translation) “It is through the hands of the bourgeoisie that the mainstay of economic life flows, the commodities created by the labour of peasants, artisans and workers. These create wealth and will lay the foundations for the triumph of the bourgeois revolution with their blood and lives, but the key to foreign and national markets is in the hands of the merchants. In their hands, too, are the treasures in which they accumulate extra labour and surplus value, treasures that drive much of social life. In their hands, finally, a large part of the arms of the manorial militias and the Lisbon garrison itself. (...) From the suburbs onwards, the labourers plough the fields and gardens with their arms. They build houses and walls, construct ships, barrels, weapons, weave coarse cloths, cut and sew suits, dresses and armour, coin coins and cut jewellery, weave reeds and fibres to make rope, kill and butcher cattle, load ships and move batels (ships) and sinister galleys across the waters. They sleep in the suburbs or huddle together in the narrow streets of the working class neighbourhoods. They get beaten in the pillory and through the streets wander madmen, cripples, dwarfs, cripples, paralysed, blind, men without hands, setting their eyes on fire and raising a fearful cry for justice from the alleys.” Coelho, *A Revolução de 1383: tentativa de caracterização e importância histórica*, 78–79.

⁷⁸ The two stronger examples might be the popular protest that followed the announcement of the marriage between the king and Leonor Teles (a vassal and previously married to a Portuguese nobleman). According to the chronicle written by Fernão Lopes, some three thousand men gathered in Lisbon and marched, led by a tailor and armed, to the king’s palace to protest against this union, blaming “the kingdom’s greats” (the noblemen and advisors of the king) for not advising the king accordingly. The second moment of tension is, according to Borges

the Revolution was essentially a bourgeois movement, which capitalized the alleged general popular discontent in the urban and rural towns and villages throughout the kingdom. It was in Lisbon, according to Borges Coelho, that the revolutionary movement began, by the hands of those who controlled the maritime commerce in the kingdom's capital, led by Álvaro Pais (vassal and Chancellor of the deceased king and his father before him). The national perspective in Borges Coelho's work is, therefore unquestionable: the discussion around the dynastic succession occupied a central role in the revolutionary movement. The peak of this situation occurred with the "election" of the new "regidor and defender of the realm", João (which would become king João I, after the 1384 *Cortes*) by the popular classes of Lisbon (where the artisans played a central role), which in the face of an "hesitant and cowed bourgeoisie", forced this election in 1383, but without ever disputing the lead of the revolution.⁷⁹ Nonetheless, this situation was not the only driving force of this movement, as Borges Coelho explains in his analysis of the aristocracy's reaction

Coelho, the 1371-72 *Cortes* (the Portuguese medieval Parliament), where "the people raised voices and clamoured against the arrogance of the clergy and nobles, arrogated to themselves the right to proclaim peace and war, dared to refuse a monetary request from the king." (our translation) Coelho, 83. According to this author, the war with Castille also had a terrible outcome, considering the peace treaty of Salvaterra de Magos, "putting the Portuguese independence under the sword of the Castilian king". After Fernando's death, "the Portuguese refused to acclaim the foreign king" and "in the heart and squares of towns and villages, the flags were truly raised for the independence of Portugal," against the king's daughter (betrothed to the Castilian king) claim. For a more detailed analysis of the popular revolts during Fernando's reign, see the works of Maria José Pimenta Ferro, and, more recent, Bruno Marconi da Costa - Maria José Pimenta Ferro, 'A Revolta Dos Mesterais de 1383,' in *Actas Das III Jornadas Arqueológicas* (Lisboa: Associação dos Arqueólogos Portugueses, 1978), 359-63; Bruno Marconi da Costa, 'Experiência Social e Resistência Em Portugal No Século XIV. Las Revoltas Dos Mesterais e a Oligarquia Camarária de Lisboa,' *Roda Da Fortuna. Revista Eletrônica Sobre Antiguidade e Medievo* 5, no. 1 (2016): 115-40; Bruno Marconi da Costa, 'Os Mesterais e o Concelho de Lisboa Durante o Século XIV: Um Esboço de Síntese (1300-1383),' *Medievalista Online*, no. 21 (1 June 2017), <https://doi.org/10.4000/medievalista.1268>; Bruno Marconi da Costa, "'Sandice de dois sapateiros e alfaiates.'" O repertório de ações coletivas dos mesterais lisboetas nos séculos XIII e XIV,' in *Trabajar en la ciudad medieval europea* (Logroño: Instituto de Estudios Riojanos, 2018), 379-408, <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=6663787>; Bruno Marconi da Costa, 'A atividade política dos mesterais de Lisboa no século XIV: da oligarquização do concelho à crise dinástica,' in *Estudos de Poder, Religião e sociedade na História* (Rio de Janeiro: Autografia, 2018), 15-29.

⁷⁹ Coelho, *A Revolução de 1383: tentativa de caracterização e importância histórica*, 92-94.

and how the people and the bourgeoisie fought against that reaction, in the cities, but also in the rural areas.⁸⁰

Ultimately, this revolutionary process led to the insurrection of the peasants and artisans throughout the kingdom, driven by the contradiction of the *forces of production* and the *social relations of production*, as António Sérgio had argued. The “common people” were strangled by the oppression of two different groups: “the nobility, who hold them with serfdom, taxes, dungeons and the stump; and the bourgeoisie who forced them to work for low, fixed wages.”⁸¹ In the face of this insurrection, the popular classes met the reaction of the bourgeois movement, leader of the Revolution, which had a different set of interests to be met after the acclamation of the new king, seeking to suppress any popular appropriation of the revolutionary movement and its transformation into *Jacquerie*.⁸² This insurrection led, however, to some gains for the peasants, according to Borges Coelho, namely the end of the fixed wages and the creation of peasant “unions”, which gave the bourgeoisie some trouble to contain throughout the reign of João I. This king would be “elected” in 1385 at Coimbra’s *Cortes*, making him, according to Borges Coelho, “an elected king and almost parliamentarian”,⁸³ with some new gains to the peasants and artisans, but also to the leaders of the revolutionary movement that made him king: the bourgeoisie.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ (our translation) “We have never claimed that all bourgeoisie, rural or otherwise, have held up the Master’s [João] pendant, nor that the *small folk* haven’t taken every opportunity to conquer goods in the moonlight. What we are saying is that the class as a whole, in terms of men and interests, took the lead right from the start, for better or worse. What is being said is that the main events took place under the leadership of their captains. Nor do we deny the outbreak and vigour of the peasant uprisings that took place in some villages. Certain perplexities, especially among the more honourable, the perplexities of the good men of Montemor, stem precisely from the thorn in the bourgeoisie’s throat - the fear of those holding the other side of the rope.” Coelho, 103.

⁸¹ (our translation) Coelho, 108.

⁸² (our translation) “The incident in Vila Viçosa with Vasco Porcalho shows how the bourgeoisie did not agree with the popular insurrection. Porcalho, the town’s captain, had been arrested for colluding with the King of Castile. And when the people shouted: ‘Let the traitor die with as many as he has!’ saying to set him on fire, they made them stand still.’ To the Álvaro Coitados it wasn’t convenient that the revolution would degenerate into *Jacquerie*.” Coelho, 109–10.

⁸³ Coelho, 123–62.

⁸⁴ Coelho, 123–25.

Like these two authors, Joel Serrão interpreted this period also as a revolution. However, in his work,⁸⁵ he presents this revolutionary movement divided into two distinct moments: from 1383 until 1384 as a popular revolution, and from 1384 to 1385 as a bourgeois appropriation of the revolutionary movement, transforming it into a bourgeois revolution. In dialogue with other authors, such as António Sérgio and Jaime Cortesão, Joel Serrão rejects some of the ideas conveyed by these historians. This position becomes very clear in a chapter the author devotes to answering the interpretative proposals of both António Sérgio and Jaime Cortesão, asking directly in the second point of analysis in his book (in English: "The Portuguese Revolution of 1383"), "until the beginning of the struggle where was, António Sérgio, the «impulse, direction and funding by the bourgeoisie»?".⁸⁶

Serrão, although acknowledging the value of Sérgio's work on this subject and even recognizing the validity of some of his conclusions, namely the class struggle determined by the circumstances of the fourteenth century, disagrees with the role played by the bourgeoisie in the awakening of the "civil war" (António Sérgio's term) that took place in Portugal between 1383 and 1385. Also, unlike António Borges Coelho, Joel Serrão is not convinced, because he affirms that there is no evidence to support such interpretation, that Álvaro Pais might have led the bourgeois revolutionary movement.⁸⁷ For this author, the war against Castile did not interest the bourgeoisie, because

⁸⁵ Joel Serrão, *O Carácter Social Da Revolução de 1383*, Cadernos Da Seara Nova. Estudos Históricos (Lisboa: Seara Nova, 1946). The first edition of this study was published in 1946, with five other editions shortly after the Carnation Revolution, between 1976 and 1985, proving both the interest showed by the public in this work, and also (considering the dates of these last editions) the clear academic openness felt after the destruction of the fascist regime and its structures.

⁸⁶ (our translation) Serrão, 37.

⁸⁷ (our translation) "What fact or argument shows us that Álvaro Pais was the agent of the *haute* bourgeoisie at the start of the revolution? None, it seems to us. Neither was he exactly a *haute* bourgeois (is a *haute* bourgeois a man who owes his 'honour and advancement' not to lucrative commercial work but to royal favour for his bureaucratic tasks?), nor does Andeiro's murder reveal, in any case, the definite purpose of sparking the social struggle that, as events unfolded, came to fruition. (...) if this project was really an idea of the bourgeoisie (...) the socio-economic antinomies that led 'some Portuguese to want to destroy others' set a very different course for subsequent events - a course that, if the bourgeois leadership of the events is to be believed, was very hostile to their intentions: what would they profit from a war with Castile (a war with a hypothetical victorious outcome), which had defeated us three times in a row not so long ago?" Serrão, 48-49.

the chances of losing were too high and their interests could have been protected under the reign of a Castilian king. What then sparked the revolution? For Joel Serrão the answer lay with the “small folk” of Lisbon, which “was forced to elect a leader, and it is then that the Master [João], eager to flee to England and escape the consequences of his thoughtless deed [killing Andeiro, a Galician nobleman said to be the queen’s lover], becomes *Regidor and Defender of the Realm*.”⁸⁸ Only after this episode the adherence of the bourgeoisie to this cause becomes clearer, aimed against Fernando’s heir and her husband, the king of Castile, by demand and intimation of the people of Lisbon, led by Afonso Penedo, a cooper. Furthermore, the impact of the Revolution on rural areas, where it had more violent contours, clearly shows, according to Serrão, that “the 1383 revolution was a movement mainly directed against the landowners, with whom, the *haute* commercial and maritime bourgeoisie wouldn’t have a declared divergence of interests.”⁸⁹

For this reason, Joel Serrão presents the revolution of 1383 divided into two distinct moments. As he puts it: “It is wrong to assume that the so-called revolution of 1383-85 had, from its beginning to its end, the same social character: there are not one but two revolutions in it: that of 1383, carried out by the «common people», with a clear character of *protest* against their living conditions at the time, and that of 1385, in which the bourgeoisie supplanted and dominated the «small folk», which we could call the «revolution-organization». The existence of these two revolutions may have been the root of the divergent interpretations that have been formulated for them until now.”⁹⁰ For this reason we mentioned the appropriation of the revolutionary movement by the bourgeoisie, according to Serrão’s interpretation. What began as an essential popular movement, a contradiction between the *forces of production* and the *social relations of production*, motivated by the lack of living conditions, a direct consequence of wages’ decline throughout the fourteenth century, was shortly after its beginning capitalized by the social class that

⁸⁸ (our translation) Serrão, 49.

⁸⁹ (our translation) Serrão, 50.

⁹⁰ Serrão continues: “One, the first, has as its relevant characteristic the agitation of the working masses asserting themselves in bellicose acts of murder, robbery, in short, of collective protest, against the *order*; the other, the bourgeois, after this first one, taking the leadership, when it recognizes that its interests are also at stake, and winning, will erase the demands of the poor, for decades, for the mirage of the gold of spices and slaves, which are beyond the Tenebrous Sea, and where it is necessary to go and get them.” (our translation) Serrão, 42–43.

had means to wage a war and support João's claim to the throne, for their own political, social and economic gain.

The dialogue Joel Serrão establishes with the work of Jaime Cortesão,⁹¹ allows us to understand also his divergences with this author's interpretation of the Portuguese revolution of 1383-85, which he perceives as a moment of *national* revolution. Inspired by the works on medieval economic and social history by Henri Pirenne, but mostly by the interpretations and method of Oliveira Martins, Jaime Cortesão places the Portuguese sovereignty and the integrity of the kingdom as the most relevant factor for the start of the revolution in 1383; "Woe betide those who aligned with them [the Castilians] against the integrity and independence of the Nation!", writes Cortesão.⁹²

The class struggle identified by the previous authors in this period is not absent in this work, however, this is, in a way, supplanted by some sort of "national pride" that the author suggests to have existed among the Portuguese classes at the time, and for that reason, in the moment the privileged classes (nobility and clergy) declared their support to a "usurper foreign" king, the revolutionary movement was bound to begin. In any case, according to this author, the revolution was a product of the "cooperation, even if with different proportions, of all the classes", which had as main goal "avoiding the foreign usurpation [of the Portuguese Crown] (...) [and] a work of the majority of the nation and not just a small part",⁹³ which is a clear distinction compared to the analysis made by the historians presented so far in this study.

⁹¹ The work by Jaime Cortesão had been first made public as a part of a collective volume, directed by Luís de Montalvor (1891-1947), published in two volumes in 1930 and 1932 - Luís de Montalvor, ed., *História Do Regimen Republicano Em Portugal*, vol. 1 (Lisboa: Ática, 1930); Luís de Montalvor, ed., *História Do Regimen Republicano Em Portugal*, vol. 2 (Lisboa: Ática, 1932). The same study was then published as a part of Jaime Cortesão's complete works, first published in 1964, after the publication of Joel Serrão's book - Jaime Cortesão, *Os factores democráticos na formação de Portugal* (Lisboa: Portugália, 1964). This work was then re-edited three times, in 1974, 1978 and finally in 1984, showing the significance of this debate in the Portuguese historiographical context at least until the 1980s. After this decade, the discussion on this topic had a clear decline, with a general consensus within the academic community to refer to the revolution of 1383-85 as a *crisis*. This shall be the theme for a following study we hope to publish soon after this.

⁹² (our translation) Cortesão, *Os factores democráticos na formação de Portugal*, 133.

⁹³ (our translation) Cortesão, 137.

His critics on the foreign policies of king Fernando are very clear throughout his book,⁹⁴ blaming the king and his action (supported and guided by the privileged groups), which the author claims to be a “masterpiece of insanity”, for the situation the kingdom was facing by the time he died, undermining the independence of Portugal. Facing the loss of this independence, Álvaro Pais, “a statesmen” in Cortesão’s words, puts in motion the revolutionary movement which would “kill the lover of the hateful queen [Leonor Teles]”, presenting himself to the people “with the halo of avenger of the nation and its defender [João, Master of Avis]”,⁹⁵ by directing the popular uprising in defence of João, Master of Avis, which would be later elected *Regidor and Defender of the Realm*.

To this interpretation, Joel Serrão very astutely asks Jaime Cortesão which “people” is he referring to in his work, claiming that Cortesão wishes to confuse people with nation. “The question arises: which people? the common people or the wealthy upper bourgeoisie? What seems to us is that when one defends an “economic and political formula” one is necessarily defending a class or a party, and not the nation, which is always an antinomy of divergent interests.”⁹⁶ Serrão implies, thus, that these are concepts that wouldn’t have had any meaning to the people living in the late Middle Ages. For this author it is clear that the revolution was not some kind of logical consequence in the course of the kingdom’s history, as Cortesão often implies, and that, because of its dual characteristic (first popular and then captured by the bourgeoisie), did not change structurally the Portuguese society at the end of the Middle Ages; the former aristocracy was replaced by new members, it’s certain, but

⁹⁴ In a lot of ways, similar to the way previous historians did when analyzing the policies of some historical characters, such as the king Afonso V, who is heavily criticised by some historians in the nineteenth century, such as Oliveira Martins or Rebello da Silva (1822-1871), for what they considered to be a “plundering the royal treasury” in favour of the privileged groups, highlighting the role played by his son, the king João II, perceived as an “anti-aristocratic” king. The prevailing ideologies of the nineteenth century become, thus, very clear in their works, with a strong and declared defence of the local authorities and municipalism, individual rights, or the limited power of the king (which, of course, is not factual for the reign of João II). We have dealt with this theme on another article, mentioned above (Ribeiro, ‘O Príncipe Perfeito’).

⁹⁵ (our translation) Cortesão, *Os factores democráticos na formação de Portugal*, 135.

⁹⁶ (our translation) Serrão, *O Carácter Social Da Revolução de 1383*, 55.

those were still (or were made) noblemen, and the feudal structure endured for some time after the revolution.⁹⁷

It becomes clear, thus, that even among those historians recognized in this work as opponents of the fascist regime, did not have a similar way of interpreting this historical moment, nor have all of them attributed the same relevance to our key historical agents, the artisans. Although the four of them argued that 1383-85 was indeed a revolution, we can find three different lines of thought not only on what constitutes a revolution, but also (and mainly) on the contours of this medieval revolution. The first two (António Sérgio and António Borges Coelho) seem to share a similar ground in their interpretation, presenting this moment as a *bourgeois revolution*, with some criticism by Joel Serrão to this interpretation, since this last author believes the *popular* character of the beginning of the revolutionary movement to be undeniable, even though it might have been captured and later led by the bourgeoisie in an attempt to ensure their political, social and economic gain, but also to suppress the radicalization of the movement, by controlling it and directing its course. Finally, Jaime Cortesão presents a very distinct interpretation of the historical records, seeing 1383-85 as an uprising in which members from distinct social classes participated, making it a *national revolution*, which had as main concern the head of the Portuguese Crown, ensuring the “nation” would not lose its independence to a “foreigner” (the Castilian king, married to the daughter and heir of the late king Fernando).

In opposition to these approaches, we might even consider the works of two more historians, clearly engaged with the Portuguese fascist regime (as historians, but also in political roles). It becomes, then, relevant to present some conclusions of the interpretations made by Marcello Caetano (the dictator that replaced Salazar after 1968), and also Franz-Paul de Almeida Langhans (a private secretary of the dictator Salazar), since both of them have interpreted this historical moment as a *crisis*, a concept that seems to have found relative consensus in the Portuguese academy at least since the 1980s.

⁹⁷ (our translation) “The political arrangement that followed the revolution of 1383-85 was not, in fact, revolutionary: an old nobility was replaced by a new one that, although of bourgeois extraction, was nevertheless functionally identical to the old one. In short: the structure of Portuguese society was not changed by the revolution of 1383-85. If it was a feudal structure or, if you prefer, a seigniorial one, it remained and would remain feudal.” Serrão, 54.

In his work, *A Crise Nacional de 1383-85*,⁹⁸ Marcello Caetano gathers his two main studies for this theme: *As Cortes de 1385*, and *O Concelho de Lisboa na Crise de 1383-85*, published in the 1950s, engaging with the historiographical debate that had been occurring in Portugal since, at least, the previous decade. Beginning with the titles of his works, one can already understand his reluctance (or even rejection) in referring to the historical moment under analysis as a revolution, referring to it as a *national crisis*. However, between the two texts, it is not impossible to find a reference to some kind of *revolution*, since the author does perceive this moment, at times, as a revolutionary movement. It is not, nonetheless, a revolution as the Marxist historiography labelled or understood it, but rather a *corporatist revolution*. On that we will try to explore a bit more later.

His first mentioned work dealt with the analysis of the 1385 *Cortes*, which can be translated, in several ways, as the Portuguese medieval Parliament,⁹⁹ where Caetano refers to the relevance of this meeting as a way of “giving legal sanction” to the “popular revolution that, in April 1384, spread from Lisbon to great part of the country (...) defining the rules for a constitutional regime”.¹⁰⁰ However, if this author calls the movement as a revolution, he does not do it in a similar way of the previous historians. For Caetano, in

⁹⁸ In English: “The National Crisis of 1383-85”. This book was published in 1985, after our chronological arc. However, this work is the result of a collection of two distinct texts, previously written by Caetano. The first one, “The 1385 Cortes”, was initially published in 1951, and the second one, “The Council of Lisbon in the Crisis of 1383-85”, published in 1953. Here, we will analyze both of these texts in their initial publication (from the 1950’s: Marcello Caetano, ‘As Cortes de 1385,’ *Revista Portuguesa de História* V (1951): 5–86; Marcello Caetano, ‘O Concelho de Lisboa Na Crise de 1383-85,’ *Anais Da Academia Portuguesa de História*, II, IV (1953): 175–247. This historian has also another relevant study for this theme but mainly focused on the circumstances that preceded the death of king Fernando, for which we have discarded a more focused analysis in our study: Marcello Caetano, ‘A Administração Municipal de Lisboa Durante a 1ª Dinastia (1179-1383),’ *Revista Da Faculdade de Direito Da Universidade de Lisboa*, 7–8 (1951).

⁹⁹ This institutional structure has been analyzed by many Portuguese historians since the last century, with most of them (especially in the last decades) referring to the *Cortes* as *Parliament*. One of the most known historians that focused on the study of this institution was Armindo de Sousa (1941-1998): Armindo de Sousa, *O parlamento medieval português e outros estudos*, 1.a edição, Fios da história (Porto: Fio da Palavra, 2014). It has been referred to as *Parliament*, in short, because it was an assembly that gathered the king, the privileged classes (nobles and clergymen), and also the popular classes (represented by the Council’s procurators), since 1254. Until then this institution was known as *Curia Regis*, with the representation of only the privileged classes.

¹⁰⁰ (our translation) Caetano, ‘As Cortes de 1385,’ 5.

1383-85 there was more than just a social issue at stake, deeply rooted in an “indisputable patriotic feeling”; this struggle was also based on a religious issue, for the Castilian king supported the so-called anti-Pope, in a period deeply marked by the Papal Schism and the game of influences and power behind it.¹⁰¹ The Portuguese revolution of 1383 was also a fight between the “right” and “true” church against the schismatics.¹⁰²

Caetano identifies, thus, three “parties” in which these *Cortes* were divided: one composed by those who supported the claim of Beatriz, daughter of king Fernando, to whom the author refers to as *legitimist*;¹⁰³ the second one, *legitimist-nationalist*, supported the claim of the “legitimized” Fernando’s brothers,¹⁰⁴ since the election of Beatriz could compromise the independence of the Portuguese kingdom; and the *nationalists*, the third party represented, who supported the claim of João, Master of Avis.¹⁰⁵ According to Caetano, this third party “put aside any concerns about legitimacy in the face of the supremacy

¹⁰¹ For a minimal understanding of the Portuguese king’s position on this subject we should mention the somewhat inconstant policies of king Fernando. The Schism began in 1378, with the election of a new pope in Rome and another in Avignon, France (which would be known as anti-pope). Initially (1378-79) Fernando aligned with the pope in Rome, from 1379 to 1381 with the anti-pope, from 1381 to 1382 with the pope, and then again with the anti-pope from 1382 to 1383. These allegiances were based mostly on the policies of alliances the Portuguese king had with other kingdoms (generally speaking: when allied with England and at war with Castile, allegiance with the pope in Rome; when at peace with Castile, allegiance with the anti-pope in Avignon).

¹⁰² “It is clear that in the controversy with the Castilian King, the Portuguese jurists sought to take full advantage of the fact that he had recognised the Antipope of Avignon, calling for the cause of the Master of Avis, already supported by an indisputable patriotic feeling and which for a part of the population was a pretext for a movement of a social nature, yet another solid support, this one of a religious nature: the supporters of D. João I fought for the true Church against the schismatics and benefited from the indulgences of the crusade granted by Urban VI to those who fought the Castilian king.” (our translation) Caetano, ‘As Cortes de 1385,’ 26.

¹⁰³ This party, according to Caetano, was obviously not represented at Coimbra (where the *Cortes* were held).

¹⁰⁴ Sons of king Pedro I and Inês de Castro. There are no actual records that can attest their legitimation without any doubt, even though the king did assume to have married in secret with Inês de Castro, before she was murdered, in 1355. From this alleged marriage were born three sons and one daughter: Afonso (died as a child), João, duke of Valencia de Campos (known nowadays as Valencia de Don Juan, in León), Dinis, lord of Cifuentes (in Guadalajara, Castile), and Beatriz, married to Sancho of Castile, count of Albuquerque (in Badajoz, Castile) and illegitimate son of king Alfonso XI of Castile.

¹⁰⁵ Caetano, ‘As Cortes de 1385,’ 11.

of national interest: the defense of Portuguese independence required a king who was Portuguese and closely linked to the cause of the Nation, which excluded Beatriz, married to the King of Castile, and the children of Inès de Castro, who lived in Castile and had already fought for it against Portugal. Therefore, there was no other solution but to consider the throne vacant and elect a sovereign without taking into account the traditional rules of succession, with the choice falling on the popular leader that was João, Master of Avis, although a cleric and bastard."¹⁰⁶ It starts to become clearer, then, the idea behind Caetano's interpretation of 1383-85, as a national movement, with alleged nationalistic purposes and worries.

On the social character of the revolution, Caetano argues that, by the time of Coimbra's *Cortes*, the popular support of the new elected king (João, Master of Avis) was still strong in its power and intents, but was not formed anymore by the "small folk", as it was in 1383 in Lisbon, where the artisans had a strong influence in the direction of the revolutionary movement (which the author refers to as "political crisis with the appearance of a social revolt"), demanding for several changes in the local government, most of them approved by the then *Regidor and Defender of the Realm*.¹⁰⁷ For Caetano, those who spoke in the name of the "people" were now landowners and urban merchants, who had the financial ability to support the war against Castile and the claim of Beatriz and her husband.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁶ (our translation) Caetano, 11.

¹⁰⁷ (our translation) "The popular arm in the *Cortes* is no longer, however, formed by members of those masses of «small folk» who so readily took the Master's side throughout the country and gave the political crisis the appearance of a social revolt: the council prosecutors also protest against the excesses of this mob, clearly finding it strange the support that the demagogy had at one point on the part of the revolutionary government. The prosecutors are not even the craftsmen who in Lisbon had sought to achieve a position of command in the municipal administration and even the right to monitor and be present in the king's own council." Caetano, 64.

¹⁰⁸ (our translation) "Those who expressed the votes of the kingdom's cities and villages in the *Cortes* were the most serious people, linked to the land through property or with serious interests in commerce, and supported by jurists in whom an ideal of order, justice and power imbued with Roman texts tempered their renewing impetus. It was these, and only these, who could give the king the money needed for the war and they did so, safeguarding its expenditure by appointing the *treasurer of the councils*, with his clerk; as only they could give the appearance of genuineness to the representation of the kingdom's important places in the *Cortes*, because if the quantity could not be overwhelming, at least the quality of the procurators had to be chosen to show that they were on good terms with the Master." Caetano, 64.

In the second study presented, the author introduces what he believes to have been the essence of the revolution of 1383-85: a *corporatist revolution*. This idea is, therefore, profoundly in line with some philosophical debates and necessities at the time the text was written, since the Portuguese fascist regime presented itself as a Corporatist State, inspired by the fascist model of the Italian State led by Mussolini. The main idea behind it (which we intend to explore in a future study focused on the uses of medieval corporatism by the Portuguese fascist historiography) was that the nation was a whole, rejecting the idea of the Marxist *class struggle*, integrating families, local communities, and corporations. The goal was clear: to suppress the need for syndicalism and the formation of political parties, establishing a singular *National Union*, which became in practice the single party of the regime (although it was not labelled as such). It was the ultimate rejection of any idea of democracy by the fascist regime in Portugal and the obliteration of labour rights.

This idea, although not explicitly mentioned in Caetano's work, underlies his analysis on "The Council of Lisbon in the Crisis of 1383-85". His argument is that "the revolutionary investiture of the Master of Avis in the regency of the Kingdom" was a consequence of the pressure made by the "small folk" of Lisbon, who, by threat of violence and accusations of Lisbon's bourgeoisies being "bad patriots", forced them to recognize their selected *regidor* (João).¹⁰⁹ From this contribution of the popular masses, led by the city's artisans,

¹⁰⁹ (our translation) "On 15 December, "many people from the city" gathered at the monastery and were harangued by João, who expressed his personal disinterest in power, but agreed to take on the regency and defence of the Kingdom as long as they all promised to help him unconditionally in bearing such grave burdens. The response was prompt: the crowd shouted in unison for him to stay, promised to dedicate their lives and property to the war effort – "to any adventure for the honour of the kingdom and its defence" – and joyfully acclaimed the Master of Avis's final consent to lead the revolution. However, they soon noticed that "many honourable citizens" were missing from the meeting, including bourgeoisie from the city's wealthy and respected families, landowners, merchants, and experienced people from the city administration whose votes were important to obtain in an issue of such importance. (...) On the 16th, the municipal assembly met in the "council chamber". The Master spoke again, explaining what had happened the day before; but when he finished, he was greeted by an embarrassed silence. The "good men" were the ones who had the most to lose. The revolution was an adventure in which they did not want to take responsibility. And they whispered to each other, not daring to speak out openly. The meeting, however, was attended by the common people, as usually happened when the city's serious interests were at stake. Respectful at first, the prolonged indecision of the leaders began to make them frantic. Among the audience, the

this group would receive some political gains, re-entering the local government through the *House of the 24* (in Portuguese, *Casa dos 24*).¹¹⁰ Nonetheless, what comes out of this meeting and specially out of this “popular” support to João’s claim to the throne is a restructure of the city Council’s privileges, which was only possible through what we can only assume as *class collaboration* or some kind of *social harmony*, the foundation of the rhetoric behind the *corporatist* theory. Through the “state” (or in this case the central government) intervention, the merchants and artisans of Lisbon now had a new set of privileges which they had wanted for some time, such as larger participation in the government of the city, in the management of collective life, but also financial benefits that would free Lisbon’s merchants from the competition of foreign merchants, by eliminating some taxes within the realm.¹¹¹

This *corporatist* approach is also the basis for Franz-Paul de Almeida Langhans’ works. This author has mainly studied the organization of urban labour in Portugal at the end of the Middle Ages, especially after the revolution of 1383-85, with a focus on the mentioned *House of the 24* in Lisbon,¹¹² and it

cooper Afonso Anes Penedo stood out, who, putting his hand on a sword that he had at his belt, reproached the bourgeoisie for being bad patriots, encouraging them to ratify the popular decision. But even so, the notables did not resolve their decision. And then the cooper did not hesitate to make formal threats. He reminded them that, for his sake, he had nothing more to lose than his head, but that, for that very reason, if the leaders did not want to accompany him, they would also have to answer for theirs before leaving... (...) Given the commotion and seeing that they could not resolve anything other than what the people demanded, the good men granted what had been promised the day before in S. Domingos.” Caetano, ‘O Concelho de Lisboa Na Crise de 1383-85,’ 180.

¹¹⁰ A system of representation of the artisans through the selection of two representatives of each craft (out of twelve), who should participate in the city’s government from then on.

¹¹¹ (our translation) “Therefore, the traditional oligarchic government of the municipality of Lisbon is tempered by the access of the artisans to the municipal power institutions: the municipality acquires the precious freedom of transit for its merchants, who can now travel armed throughout the country, without being bothered by foreign competition and without having to stop at every step at the interior customs to pay tolls and have their goods inspected; and the citizens of Lisbon acquire important prerogatives for their security, for the inviolability of their homes and for the possession of their goods.” Caetano, ‘O Concelho de Lisboa Na Crise de 1383-85,’ 247.

¹¹² Our analysis of this author’s interpretation on the revolution of 1383-85 was done based on two different studies by Almeida Langhans, concerning the crafts organization in Lisbon throughout the end of the fourteenth century and a great part of the following century - Franz-Paul de Almeida Langhans, *As Corporações Dos Ofícios Mecânicos : Subsídios Para a Sua História* (Lisboa:

is through this focus we can perceive his interpretation not only of the historical events occurring between 1383 and 1385, but mostly its outcomes. Thus, although his work does not deal greatly with the issue at hand in our study, it is still relevant to understand how the fascist historiography tried to look at the Portuguese medieval past, using key historical agents (the artisans), to answer some of their contemporary issues. In this sense, we shall not elaborate on the concept of *corporatism* and the way its alleged historical roots were fabricated by the Portuguese fascist regime, for that is a theme for another moment, but it is an image that must not go unnoticed in this approach.

The corporatist political ideology has been present in many different ideological systems and is not an exclusive invention of the twentieth century fascist regimes. It could be found even among the “liberal” currents of the previous century, and at the same time, in many other ideological systems (even within socialism). Its roots and appropriation by modern political philosophy are not our main concern here, but they do seem to have played an interesting role in building the Portuguese fascist regime, after 1926, but more firmly after 1933, with the approval of the new Constitution and especially after the approval of the *National Labour Statute* (in Portuguese: *Estatuto do Trabalho Nacional*), which identifies the main ideas of the labour organization in the Portuguese State, following a corporatist ideology. Marcello Caetano had even stated once that this legal document “corresponds exactly, by its nature, structure and purposes, to the Italian *Carta del Lavoro*, from which it even translates some formulas of doctrine and organization.”¹¹³

In a lecture by Constantino de Menezes Cardoso, given on the radio on July 6th 1937, this Judge of the district of Lisbon, presents some ideas on how medieval corporatism might have influenced the social politics of António de Oliveira Salazar, hinting precisely at the idea we intend to focus on here, finally. The edification of the fascist Portuguese state at the beginning of the twentieth century relied, among many other measures, on a tight control over the historical narrative, building an analysis of the past that could indeed answer to their contemporary needs. For this purpose, the studies on medieval

Imprensa Nacional de Lisboa, 1943); Franz-Paul de Almeida Langhans, *A Casa Dos Vinte e Quatro de Lisboa. Subsídios Para a Sua História* (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional de Lisboa, 1948).

¹¹³ Marcello Caetano, *O Sistema Corporativo* (Lisboa: Oficinas gráficas de o Jornal de comércio e das colónias, 1938).

corporatism by Almeida Langhans seem to us fundamental to understanding the ideological project that was being built. This historian's analyses, although pioneering in this specific field of history, are strongly dictated by, on the one hand, his own ideology (aligned with the fascist regime), and on the other, by a material need to justify historically the fascist state organization. Once again, the main idea that underlies the rhetoric surrounding medieval corporatism is one connected with overcoming of class struggle and the achievement of social "peace", that would eventually allow Portuguese society to march into its somewhat lost "glory" (from the perspective of the regime, considering the tumultuous history of the First Republic).

Final remarks

Throughout this perhaps too long analysis we have tried to show how the Portuguese Revolution of 1383-85 was perceived by the historiography during the fascist dictatorship in Portugal. As we were able to understand it was not, as it still isn't to our day, a consensual topic, with two main concepts being presented among the various studies: *revolution* and *crisis*, even considering the divergencies between the multiple authors analyzed or just mentioned here. The authors we proposed to analyze seem to be an excellent selection for our purpose. If one could argue that most of them presented the historical moment as a revolution (which is undoubtedly true), it is also true that even among these authors, the divergences of analysis are more than evident. Yes, it was for most of them a *revolution*, but not a similar revolution among them: a bourgeois revolution, a popular revolution, or a national revolution. For that reason, the authors on the "revolution side" were more numerous than on the "crisis side", precisely to make clear the distinction between what constitutes a revolution, and how 1383-85 could be perceived as such.

Our main goal was, as presented at the beginning of this study, to affirm that history is an ideological exercise, because so are its authors: the historians. Even disregarding for a moment, the more or less hidden motivations that led these authors to write their studies, the conceptual debate focused on this specific historical period proves precisely this! Using the same historical document as the main source for their interpretations, all of them reached

distinct conclusions, not because the source speaks differently to any of them, but rather because they were able to read it from different perspectives, which is obviously motivated by the historian's ideologies, by the way the historian looks into the past, with his/her contemporary eyes. At the same time, we intended to present some kind of evolution or development of the historic-philosophic thought among the Portuguese intellectual elite, which becomes even clearer when we compare the results presented here with the period that followed, as we intend to do soon. Nonetheless, even by comparing with the previous period, that development can be understood if we consider, for instance, how the concept of revolution became less and less used.

It seems undeniable that the social and political contexts of the authors analyzed here were crucial for the way they perceived the past, in this particular case, the medieval past, with a bigger focus on the revolution of 1383-85. Some of the critics of the authors we presented as "oppositional" to the fascist regime even considered at times that they might have been trying to find in the past, a revolution they wanted to see in their present, as Borges Coelho states in his preface to the fifth edition of his book (in 1985, the commemoration of the 600 years of the medieval revolution). Strangely enough, to present the historical moment as a crisis doesn't seem to have sparked such a violent reaction by so many historians in Portugal who still use this concept to describe this moment until this day (wrongfully, in our opinion). For many reasons, this concept might have served the fascist regime better than an eventual revolution. The corporatist ideology of the regime, based on a notion of social peace and absence of class struggle (or even its need), answered material needs the Portuguese State had during the long night of fascism. The question that remains is why it became a general consensus after the revolution in 1974, and especially after 1985?

We shall hope to give some possible answers in the following study, to be published in 2025. Nonetheless, we should mention the extreme focus the historians seem to apply to the dynastic change in this historical moment, sometimes disregarding the social movements, based on the political and economic circumstances at the time, that underlay this entire period, and that were a reflection of a contradiction that had been present for many decades. This is to say that it seems to us that historians might have analyzed this moment from an elite perspective, considering the "major events" and especially the Crown (as an institution), and not from a popular perspective, a way of

writing history from below, acknowledging the centrality of the *structures* (that Braudel developed so brightly). That, we believe, is what might be missing in this analysis!

For this reason, it seemed to us relevant to return to this conceptual discussion, especially on the Portuguese case. Keeping track of the more recent studies developed in the European historiography, the need for a complexification of the conceptual debate on the Portuguese medieval studies seems undeniable, one that would appeal to other concepts that can definitely challenge that of *revolution* that we openly argued for throughout this analysis.

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